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The American Mercury

AMERICA'S SPINELESS FOREIGN POLICY
PROTESTANT-CATHOLIC MARRIAGE

James Burnham

CASE FOR OSTEOPATHY

As told to Alberta Williams

MEDICAL POSITION—A REPLY

Donald B. Thorburn, D.O.

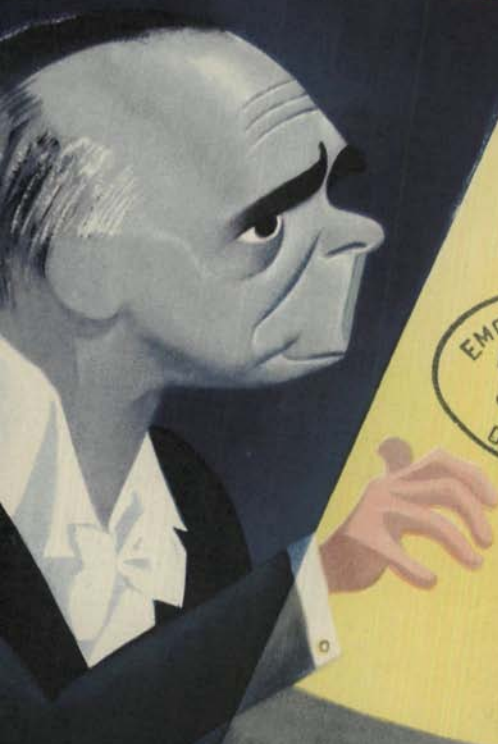
FARMERS MILK THE PUBLIC TREASURY

Joseph D. Wassersug, M.D.

AND DOWNS OF "DIRTY" WORDS

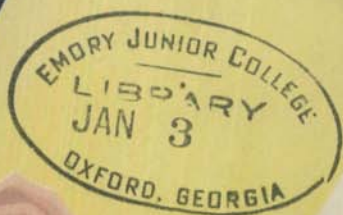
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322

FANTASTIC JOSÉ ITURBI
by Arthur Bronson
Page 14





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The American Mercury

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VOLUME LXX

JANUARY 1950

NUMBER 313

Our Spineless Foreign Policy	James Burnham	3
Fantastic José Iturbi	Arthur Bronson	14
The Farmers Milk the Public Treasury	Sam Shulsky	24
The Case for Osteopathy	Donald B. Thorburn, D.O., Ph.D.	32
The Medical Position — A Reply	Joseph D. Wassersug, M.D.	42
THE THEATRE: The Curse of the Literal	George Jean Nathan	51
<i>Phrase Origins</i> — 57	Louis Jay Herman	55
Our Catholic-Protestant Marriage	<i>as told to</i> Alberta Williams	56
Late Autumn, <i>A Poem</i>	Mary Poole	64
The Crisis in American Poetry	Robert Hillyer	65
The Problem of Pain, <i>A Story</i>	J. A. Brown	72
<i>Phrase Origins</i> — 58	Morris Rosenblum	79
Wellington Koo Meets the Press		80
The Ups and Downs of "Dirty" Words	Falk Johnson	85
What Keeps Building Costs High	Holman Harvey	93
DOWN TO EARTH: Anthropomorphism Forever	Alan Devoe	99
Poet's Return, <i>A Poem</i>	M. Whitcomb Hess	103
The Concord Coach	Stewart H. Holbrook	104
THE LIBRARY: W. Somerset Maugham	Charles Angoff	111
Awareness, <i>A Poem</i>	Ethel Barnett de Vito	117
THE CHECK LIST		118
THE OPEN FORUM		121
COVER (José Iturbi) by Al Hirschfeld		
DEPARTMENTAL DRAWINGS by Egon Adler		

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AM 1-50

The American Mercury

OUR SPINELESS FOREIGN POLICY

BY

JAMES BURNHAM

AT SOME point during the spring of 1949, it became customary in the United States to say that "we are winning the cold war." In editorials, speeches and articles, U. S. foreign policy was judged and found not wanting. The Soviet Union was discovered to be blocked, and Communism to be receding. "The tension had lessened"; internal affairs began to take precedence again over foreign in the business of Congress and the plans of politicians.

This optimistic estimate does not seem, however, to have been sup-

ported by the facts. We should not regard a businessman as particularly successful if, instead of going bankrupt as feared, he had finished 2 or 3 million in the red. Nor would we label a man healthy if, instead of dying, he had only lost a half-dozen limbs and organs.

Let us, in order to disentangle our judgment from day-by-day moods, compare the world position of the United States in 1939 to its position ten years later. In 1939, what was taken to be the principal concentration of enemy power was confined to

JAMES BURNHAM, professor of philosophy at New York University, is the author of three widely discussed books on politics: *The Managerial Revolution*, *The Machiavellians*, and *The Struggle for the World*. This article is a slightly condensed version of one chapter in his latest book, *The Coming Defeat of Communism*, to be published soon by John Day.

a limited area of Central Europe. Within this area was a population of less than 100 million. The enemy technological level was high and his military machine formidable. He lacked, however, both the possession of, and direct access to, many of the most essential raw materials. His power was extended outside of his boundaries by the manipulation of fifth columns within other nations; but, since these were cemented only by a narrowly chauvinist and racial ideology which could have no wide appeal, their strength was negligible.

The enemy power concentration in 1939 was, in fact or potentially, counter-balanced by several other autonomous power centers of some magnitude: the Soviet Union, Great Britain with her Empire and Dominions, France, and Japan (as well, of course, as the United States).

In 1949, the enemy power concentration is based upon a vast territory which includes the most favorable strategic position of the world, the heartland of Eurasia. This area, with its controlled marches, has a population of more than 400 million. Though technologically backward, the enemy's military machine is also formidable, and he has at his disposal nearly all essential or important raw materials. His fifth columns, not handicapped by overt chauvinism or racialism, have penetrated deep into

the tissue of all political organisms outside of his direct control, and are in their own right massive fighting forces.

Moreover, except for the United States itself, there no longer exist any other counter-balancing power centers of any magnitude. Germany (the previous enemy concentration) and Japan have been broken; France has been dissolved; and Great Britain, with her Empire shorn and her economy in desperation, though by no means finished is no longer capable of independent action.

II

Since 1945, the Soviet Union has proceeded steadily with the reduction to its domination of the nations of Eastern Europe. In spite of the fact that in 1942 and 1943 it had been thrust back hundreds and in many directions thousands of miles inside its own frontiers, and was close to total defeat, the Soviet Union has stretched an ever-tightening hand over Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Rumania, Albania. By careful diplomacy and infiltration, it has gained a foothold in the Near East; and, by exploiting the social difficulties in Egypt, the Belgian Congo and South Africa, it has for the first time made a crossing of the land bridge into

Africa. It has developed task forces in nearly every Latin-American nation, and has carried through major actions in Colombia and Costa Rica — immediately north and south, that is, of the Panama Canal.

In France and in Italy, the two major countries of Western Europe, mass Communist Parties, surrounded and covered by millions of voters, give the Soviet Union a veto power over economic recovery and political decision, and induce a permanent paralysis of military potential. Through minor but skillfully planned actions in Greece, Turkey and Berlin, the Kremlin, at a minimum cost to itself, continues to drain vast sums and energies from the United States.

On the ideological front, there has occurred a cumulative growth of despair and the feeling of betrayal among the peoples of Eastern Europe. The morale of these peoples depends upon the conviction that their present subjection to the Soviet Empire is temporary, and that the perspective of the West includes their liberation. No important actions of the West have furthered or even sustained this conviction. The Atlantic Union, as this has been publicly presented, runs directly counter to it; the makeup of the Union, and its announced defensive purpose, seem to imply acceptance of the present division of Europe. So also do the commercial

agreements that have been negotiated between Western nations and the Communist satellite governments. Meanwhile, at the United Nations and in every international conference, the Soviet representatives maintain the ideological initiative. This is plain even in their supposed “re-treats.” The first proposals always come from the Soviet spokesmen, who always set the direction of the proceedings. The spokesmen of the West, even though their showings are often better than in the days of Teheran or Yalta, are always “reacting” to the Soviet moves.

In drawing up the balance of these years, the purges and liquidations that have been going on continuously within the Soviet Empire must not be omitted. In these purges, millions of persons have been executed, imprisoned, or sent to slower death in the slave labor camps. These millions include especially those who have been, or might have been, oriented toward the West: that is, it is our allies and potential allies who have been purged. Their ranks are the equivalent of more divisions than the Atlantic Pact is going to produce.

By far the greatest triumphs of Communist policy during these years since 1945 have, however, been in Asia. Manchuria and northern Korea have been brought within the Soviet Empire; a considerable part of China

proper has been overrun; and on the southern flank, in the big islands and in Burma and Malaysia, turmoil has been successfully maintained. Already, in 1949, the probing into southern Korea and Japan had begun. From the standpoint of the Kremlin, it would be hard to overstate the importance of the Asian victories.

During these same years since 1945, the Soviet Union has suffered only one major and unambiguous setback: the defection of Tito. This setback, however, is not yet final; and it was not gained by our policy.

In judging the success or failure of recent U. S. foreign policy, we must be careful not to distort our readings. It is true that the results, however melancholy, are not as bad as they could have been. If we had continued the 1943-46 line of conciliation and virtual capitulation to every Soviet demand — if we had adopted the line of Henry Wallace — then the balance would have been still more heavily weighted. Without the turn to a tougher line, without the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan and the airlift, the Communists would by now have Iran, Greece and perhaps Turkey, and they would quite possibly be in control of France, Italy and Germany. Moreover, it would be utopian to suppose that any policy, confronted by the problems of a

world crisis, could have had quick and easy success.

We must, however, dispel illusion. Though U. S. policy has so far avoided the worst possible, and has cut some threatened losses, it has as yet produced no clear-cut and positive gains. The supposed or real gains are at best negative or potential; none that are concrete and positive has yet been realized. The Soviet Union has given up nothing, nothing whatsoever, and has added much.

III

The principal defects in U. S. foreign policy are, I believe, the following four:

(1) *The policy is not sufficiently unified.* From this it follows that a move in one direction tends to have its results canceled by another move in a counter-direction. This has been true at every stage of the policy as it has developed since 1945. For example, we rush in money, goods and even military help to "contain Communism" in Europe at the same time that we decrease or withdraw efforts to contain Communism in China. We condemn Communism in Czechoslovakia by denouncing the persecution of the Church, and at the same time accept overtures to ourselves and our allies for increased trade with Czechoslovakia of a kind that is certain to aid the Communist rule of that coun-

try. We help Tito against Stalin by making economic deals with Tito, and at the same time solidarize ourselves with Stalin against Tito by signing a joint agreement on Carinthia. We spend hundreds of millions against the Communists in Greece, and at the same time, by withdrawing economic aid, hinder the Dutch in their efforts to control Communists in the East Indies. We denounce de Gaulle as a fascist because he wants to suppress the Communists; and at the same time denounce the Third Force French government as hopeless because it fails to suppress the Communists in Indo-China.

On the same day, one government leader will give a speech proclaiming that the Communists are irreconcilable and will never abandon their aim of world revolution, while another will insist that the Kremlin is "sincere" in wanting to decrease tension, increase trade, and come to some agreement. In laying down the perspectives for the Marshall Plan, we list as one of its goals the revival of trade between East and West Europe; and immediately thereafter we draw up lists of prohibited exports from West to East. We expose Communist propaganda as lies and moral poison, and at the same time permit UNESCO, the international propaganda organization financed largely by our money, to be infiltrated, ex-

ploited and to a large extent controlled by fellow-travelers and Communist Party members. We enter into an Atlantic Pact that can have no content unless it is directed against the Soviet Union, and insist to the world that it has no relation to the Soviet Union. We protest the economic draining of other nations by the Soviet Union, and at the same time agree, in discussing an Austrian treaty, on how the Soviet Union shall be permitted to pillage the Austrian economy.

This disunity is not merely stultifying by its direct effect on our own policies and their implementation. It is equally injurious through its effect on the confidence of other peoples in us. The rest of the world is bewildered and disoriented by what it observes, and cannot help observing, of the practical conflicts in U. S. policies. The dramatic conduct of the Berlin airlift seems to call for a spirit of firm resistance to Communism, and much of the rest of the world responds. Just as its spirit rises to the contest, it learns of secret friendly negotiations between U. S. and Soviet representatives; and the President of the United States expresses his reliance on the Kremlin's sincerity. It reads a brave speech that seems to promise the liberation of the nations behind the iron curtain; and the next day it learns that Gromyko and Baruch and

American industrialists are talking about big trade on the present political basis. It hears of a great welcome in New York and Washington to Soviet deserters and refugees; and in the DP camps, the International Refugee Organization, financed by U. S. funds, propagandizes other refugees and deserters to return to what they know will be death or enslavement in their homelands. The observed contradictions in policy, which are at first experience a puzzle, tend to lead toward cynicism and despair.

(2) *The policy is too narrow.* Unlike Communist policy, U. S. policy is not yet based on the clear realization that the present struggle for the world proceeds simultaneously and integrally along political, economic, ideological, sociological and military lines. What happens in each of these fields affects what happens in every other. It is difficult, for example, to solidify political relations with Britain if economic measures harmful to Britain are undertaken. Communist lies spread in Europe about the United States cannot be combated unless the truth about the United States is made widely available in Europe. The Chinese are not encouraged to resist Communist rule if American business insists on aiding the Chinese Communists by trade.

The United States is accused by

Communist propaganda of being "militaristic." In the sense meant by the Communists, this is almost ludicrously untrue. However, in another and very important sense, U. S. policy might well be considered too militaristic. There is a tendency for Americans to reason, not altogether consciously, somewhat as follows: After all, we have at our disposal nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. These can be relied upon. However many mistakes we make, whatever deficiencies and omissions there may be in our day-to-day actions, and even if we sustain a good many setbacks, all can quickly be made right when the showdown comes by dropping a few hundred bombs at the right spots. U. S. "militarism," that is to say, does not mean a militarization of our society — which, though doubtless increased as compared with our previous history, remains at a lesser degree than that of almost all other nations. We do run the danger of being narrowly militaristic in our historical attitude, in this seldom expressed but widely held belief that arms alone, that force, can if necessary solve all our problems. This belief is not only dangerous but false. Though great historical problems cannot be solved without force, force alone solves nothing.

The defect of narrowness is understood by many within the govern-

ment and the armed services, and during recent years steps have been taken to overcome it. The Marshall Plan, the Voice of America, and the intervention of both the AFL and the CIO in the international trade-union movement are recognitions of the importance of, respectively, the economic, the ideological, and the sociological phases of the struggle.

(3) *The policy is defensive.* So far as U. S. foreign relations since 1947 have been integrated into a single policy rather than a loose collection of conflicting policies, this has been done through the conception of "the containment of Communism." The containment of Communism is unquestionably something to be desired. "Containment," however, cannot be the end objective of a policy. More generally, a defensive policy — and containment is a variant of the defensive — can never win.

The defensive has, of course, its appropriate use, both as tactic and as strategy. In a battle by which an army implements an offensive strategy, there will always be individual units which, for a time or even for the entire battle, remain on the defensive. Not only the tactic but the strategy of an entire army or group of armies may be correctly defensive, as in the case of Eisenhower's armies at the end of 1944. Nevertheless, the

defensive never wins, except for rare and uncontrollable accidents where the opponent is already in a state of internal collapse to begin with, and in reality licked before he starts. In the case of dynamic social forces, whether nations or classes or competitive business organizations, or even rival Garden Clubs or families, victory and even, in the long run, survival come only by carrying through an attack, only by passing to the offensive. The defensive, properly understood, can never be more than a partial and temporary expedient.

A perpetual defensive is particularly fantastic in relation to the struggle against world Communism. The containment-line is almost immeasurably vast. It is not limited to the tens of thousands of miles of the Soviet Empire's border, which is itself far too great to encompass. By the methods of propaganda, subversion and infiltration, the Communist front is carried into and through every nation of the world on both sides of the border. The "front" itself is not merely geographic, but ideological, sociological and political as well. To suppose that such an opponent can be countered indefinitely by containment is to concede him victory.

(4) *The policy has no objective.* If anyone believes that there is a clear-cut objective, let him then declare

what it is. No unequivocal answer has yet been authoritatively given, nor is it implicit in the actions that have been taken. Eternal containment of Communism cannot be an objective; it is both empty and impossible. Containment can make sense only as a temporary device for the sake of some genuine objective to be gained later on.

Is the objective an agreement, a deal, with Communism? If so, what kind of deal? A deal that leaves Communist power intact where it is now established, and Communist fifth columns free to extend that power wherever they find or make an opportunity? If so, what business do we have denouncing internal measures taken within the Soviet Union itself and within the satellite nations? what concern is it of ours that Hungary or Czechoslovakia tortures or kills priests who, by Communist standards, are enemies of the State? why do we impose embargoes on exports, and order FBI agents to guard ships sailing in from behind the Iron Curtain? what objection have we to Mao Tse-tung or to the Political Bureau of the American Communist Party? If we want an agreement, we should listen to Henry Wallace or Frederick L. Shuman or Harlow Shapley. They can tell us the kind of agreement we can get, and how to get it.

But if not a genuine agreement,

then what do we want? It illuminates nothing to seek refuge in vague abstractions about "peace" and "international law" and "friendship" and "cooperation." We must be concrete: what kind of peace, on what basis? whose law, enforced by whom? what terms of friendship? cooperation toward what ends?

This lack of clear-cut objective, which vitiates so many even of those policy moves which in themselves are intelligent and promising, is not by chance. Obscurity here reflects a profound hesitation. We have not been willing to face the fact that there is only one possible objective of U. S. foreign policy: the destruction of Communist power.

IV

I wish to illustrate these defects, in particular the last two, by several examples. In order not to prejudice the evidence, I shall select policy moves which have been among the wisest and most successful.

(1) *The Berlin Airlift*. What, we must ask, did the airlift accomplish politically? What was it even supposed to accomplish?

In the spring of 1948, as the Communists gradually choked off access to Berlin, the United States leadership was challenged by the developing situation to a decision. The practical situation was novel, without exact

historical precedent. The United States, together with its allies, was manning an isolated enclave deep within enemy territory, without local resources or secure communications. In law and in fact the status of the enclave was equivocal in the extreme.

Two intelligible decisions were possible. One was to regard the position as untenable, and to withdraw. This would have meant a clear defeat. The other was to deny the enemy the right to blockade, to refuse to recognize the barriers, and to send armed convoys through with supplies. It is widely believed that General Clay, then Military Governor for the United States, was in favor of this second decision.

To send armed convoys through would have risked an armed clash; and an armed clash before the gates of Berlin would have risked, however remotely, the outbreak of general war. But well-grounded opinion in the spring of 1948, and almost universal *ex post facto* opinion, rate this risk as negligible. Everything in Soviet behavior indicates that the armed convoys would have got through without armed opposition.

The minute risk was linked to the chance for enormous gain. The direct smashing of the Berlin blockade would have been a rolling defeat for the Soviet Union which would have had cumulative repercussion through-

out the world, and above all in Eastern Europe. It would have proved that the Communists are beatable.

The United States made neither of the two possible decisions. Instead, without a previous plan and without knowing what could or should be done or for how long, the airlift was improvised. But the airlift was not a decision; or, if a decision, it was a decision not to decide. It was a means for temporizing, for putting off decisions. After it turned out to be a great technical success, and had excited the admiration of the world, it could of course be advertised as a brilliant victory. But a victory means the achievement of a goal. What was the net political gain from the triumph of the airlift? Were the Communists anywhere driven back? Were the communications to Berlin any more fully secured and guaranteed?

(2) *The intervention in Greece.* From 1947 on, as part of what has become known as the Truman Doctrine, the United States has carried out in Greece an intervention of massive scope in relation to the size and population of the country. Hundreds of millions of dollars worth of food, supplies, machinery, and weapons have been shipped in. Personnel from the United States has aided in the supervision of economic reconstruction, has considerably influenced internal

Greek politics and government measures, and has been in close liaison with the Greek armed forces.

If it had not been for this intervention, it is almost certain that the Communists would have taken control of Greece. The Soviet Empire would thereby have been extended well into the Eastern Mediterranean. Tito's defection would have become much more difficult, perhaps impossible. The Near East would have been directly threatened, and the road to Africa smoothed. The intervention has blocked these disastrous results; and thus, as we have seen, is rightly considered a success, though it is only a negative success. The United States has gained nothing by the Greek intervention, but has merely avoided an important loss. The relative cost of the negative success has been high: as against the vast resources poured out by the United States, the Communists have committed a few thousand auxiliary troops, conscripts, and dupes, small amounts of arms, and a core of trained leaders. "The Greek problem" has not been solved, and cannot be under the present defensive policy.

Greece's military and political problem cannot be solved within Greece itself, but only in the Balkans beyond Greece. That is, there can be no secure defense at Greece's borders from the Balkan Communist forces,

and therefore these forces must be got rid of. Tito's break with the Cominform, the unrest in Albania, and Bulgaria's violations of the peace treaty, present the chance of doing so at perhaps less cost than that of two years of Greek intervention.

Greece's economic problem can be solved only if the European economic problem is solved. This consideration, however, leads to a third U. S. policy.

(3) *The Marshall Plan.* There were a number of motives that led the United States to adopt and put into effect the Marshall Plan. From the point of view of the general public, there is little doubt that a directly humanitarian motive was prominent. There were also economic aims. Just as a penniless tramp is not a good customer for a storekeeper, so an impoverished Europe would be useless for trade. Moreover, not a few American businessmen saw that through the Marshall Plan credits they would have a European market for export products that could not otherwise be sold. Unquestionably, some sections of American business saw the Marshall Plan as a device that could be used to increase our economic supremacy.

The political motive, however, was derived from the containment policy. Europe, in its shattered postwar condition, was an easy mark for Communism. The economic reconstruc-

tion of Europe would permit European political stability; and the two together would give Europe a better chance to resist Communism both internally and externally. From a political standpoint, thus, the Marshall Plan was exclusively defensive in conception. As always, the defensive move is inadequate, even to fulfill the defensive purpose.

With the help of the Marshall Plan, the West European economy has somewhat improved. The Communist movements within the West European nations are somewhat weaker, though still very powerful. Nevertheless, the European economic position remains fundamentally unsound, and, granted a continuation of the present policy, it will be so at the conclusion of the Marshall Plan and of any number of post-Marshall Plans. It is not hard to understand why this must be.

The economy of continental Europe has always functioned through an interchange between the East and the West, with the East exchanging food and minerals and other raw materials for the machines, finished goods and capital of the West. Moreover, the Continent as a whole has had to trade with the rest of the world. In addition, the development of production methods at the present time has become incompatible with the political division of Europe into small, rigidly independent states.

European economic recovery, therefore, is possible only if the European iron curtain is lifted, if some measure of European unification is brought about, and if the whole world is opened up to relatively free economic interchange. One further condition should be added: West European economic and political reconstruction is impossible so long as there are mass Communist movements within the major West European nations, since these movements can and will block the reconstruction.

To achieve these conditions of European recovery is an offensive task. Many measures of the Marshall Plan might contribute to the fulfillment of that task if they were linked to a positive, offensive general policy conception. But they have not been; the Plan has been restricted by the defensive framework of containment. Therefore, once again, the Marshall Plan can have no more than a negative success; it cannot produce positive gains. Consequently, when the Plan's termination is reached, the power balance will not have significantly altered. The same problems will be present as those that originally called forth the Plan. If the same reasoning is used, a second — and a third and a fourth — Plan will have to be successively launched.

The problem is to escape from this treadmill.

FANTASTIC JOSÉ ITURBI

BY ARTHUR BRONSON

JOSÉ ITURBI must marvel occasionally at the fantastic curve of his life-line. At the age of seven he was doing a twelve-hour piano routine (2 P.M. to 2 A.M.) in a dingy movie-house in his native Valencia, in Spain, taking breaks only when Papa Iturbi would slip in at mealtimes to push some food down his throat. At the age of 54 Iturbi finds himself playing again for the movies, but this time on the screen instead of in front of it — a distinct film personality, at home in the heady company of the Walter Pidgeons, Bing Crosbys and Van Johnsons.

In between those celluloid markers lie richly exciting years in an entirely different field — the concert world. Here Iturbi gained international distinction as a pianist, an only slightly lesser prominence as a conductor, and a somewhat less enviable reputation as a Latin Peck's Bad Boy whose eruptions against women, popular music, jazz conductors and the hot dog landed him consistently but unpleas-

antly on the nation's front pages.

Iturbi has appeared in only seven films, but he already has cut a giddy figure in this medium, while enhancing his drawing power tremendously in the music world. His concert fees and grosses have skyrocketed so sharply since his film debut, according to concert managers, that today he has outstripped even Ignace Jan Paderewski, the greatest pianistic draw of all time. At the box office he far outdistances any contemporary pianist in the field, even such sure-fire attractions as Vladimir Horowitz, Rudolf Serkin and Artur Schnabel.

Between film assignments some time back, Iturbi went off on a brief three-weeks' tour of the South, and in eight recitals grossed over \$100,000. In New Orleans he drew \$15,192; in San Antonio, \$14,642; in Charleston, West Virginia, \$11,664; in Wichita Falls, Texas, \$11,240. Iturbi's concert grosses, before his film splash, ran to a third of these figures. Where his fees once ranged from \$750 to \$1500 a per-

ARTHUR BRONSON, a member of the staff of *Variety*, has contributed articles on the entertainment industry to the *MERCURY* and many other magazines. His last previous article in these pages was a profile of Burton Holmes, which appeared in the issue of December 1946.

formance, the wily Señor now plays on percentage — sometimes for as high as 75 per cent — and walks off with \$4000 to \$7500 an appearance.

Iturbi makes over \$500,000 a year now — \$200,000 from his concerts, almost as much from films, and the balance from recordings. Several years ago Iturbi's manager startled the music world by publicizing a royalty check of \$118,029.69 which the pianist had just received from RCA-Victor for six months' sales of his phonograph records. RCA officials had to admit that this was the largest single royalty check they had ever issued for that period of time. Most of the royalties came from a two-record album of the music Iturbi anonymously played for Cornel Wilde, the Chopin of the Columbia film, *A Song to Remember* (Iturbi received no screen credit because he was under contract to Metro), and from his record of Chopin's *Polonaise in A flat*, which sold over 800,000 copies. The check bounced Iturbi to the top brackets of Victor's all-time money-makers, among such immortals as Enrico Caruso and John McCormack.

Playing anything from Beethoven to boogie-woogie, Iturbi has more than anyone else successfully bridged the gap between the longhair and downbeat sets. He'll play jazz, however, only on the screen or radio, or as an occasional concert encore; Itur-

bi's longhair recitals still follow a strict classical pattern. But being a properly vain person, Iturbi is gratified at the thought that films have widened his audience, so that people who never heard of the great Iturbi during the thirty years he was concertizing now flock to his recitals.

On one of Iturbi's tours, a disappointed concert-goer advertised in the paper that he would willingly exchange his typewriter (unprocurable during wartime) for a pair of tickets to the local concert. In another city an enterprising film-house manager ran a consoling ad, saying: "Come and see José Iturbi in *Anchors Aweigh* if you can't get into his concert."

This attitude, flattering as it is, is all the more pleasant because of its suddenness. Iturbi tells the story of a friend who once suggested to Harry Cohn, president of Columbia Pictures, that the Spaniard be used for the piano work in *A Song to Remember*.

"Who is Iturbi?" Cohn asked. "I never heard of him. Can we get him for \$300?" Iturbi happened to be playing with the Los Angeles Philharmonic that Friday and the friend suggested that Cohn come to the concert to hear him.

"I can't go," said Cohn; "I got tickets for a boxing match. Have Iturbi change his concert to Thursday night."

The story is perhaps no more signif-

icant than Iturbi's entry into pictures. He had moved to Hollywood in 1938 and made his Beverly Hills home his base of operations for concert tours, the while he kept open house and enjoyed the peculiarities of his neighbors. When he played in Los Angeles some of the film colony would attend and flock to his home afterwards. And always there was some film producer who had fallen under Iturbi's piano spell and wanted him immediately for pictures. "Come out to the studio tomorrow," they would say. "You must have a screen-test; you'll be a knockout." Whenever the trusting Señor came to the studio, he would be greeted warmly by the producer. "How nice of you to come. So you want to see how we make pictures?" The screen-test would be forgotten.

After a few such experiences with unreliable invitations offered over the third or fourth highball, Iturbi withdrew completely into his Castilian pride. And when a bona fide invitation came from Metro producer Joseph Pasternak for a test for *Thousands Cheer*, Iturbi's first film, the pianist replied that he wasn't interested. When Pasternak pressed the matter, offering a contract without a test, the aggrieved Señor had his revenge. "I don't go to your studio," he said, "or even to your house. You come to mine." Defying all Holly-

wood protocol, Iturbi refused to set foot on the lots until Pasternak brought the contract to his home. And there it was signed and witnessed.

In his first film, *Thousands Cheer*, Iturbi had a relatively small, though featured rôle. The Señor, cast as himself, played some Chopin and Liszt and gave out with a performance in boogie-woogie which caused one New York film critic to call Iturbi's appearance a *tour de force* in showmanship, alone worth the price of admission.

In his succeeding films, *Music for Millions*, *Two Girls and a Sailor*, *Anchors Aweigh*, *Holiday in Mexico*, *Three Daring Daughters*, and *That Midnight Kiss*, Iturbi has continued being himself, performing brilliantly at the piano, taking an increasing share in the story proceedings and giving expression to some of the ham actor in him. In *Anchors Aweigh* he mugged with Frank Sinatra, played *The Donkey's Serenade* and did a hippodroming stunt of conducting (from the keyboard) an eighteen-piano ensemble of pretty girls in Liszt's Second Hungarian Rhapsody.

Iturbi's sister, Amparo, also a fine pianist, has appeared briefly in one or two of the films with him, including *Holiday in Mexico*. This film also included Iturbi's two grandchildren. Iturbi is an amazingly debonair grandparent and takes no pains to

conceal the relationship. He looks about 40, although actually he is fourteen years older. "My age is no secret," he said to me once. "Is in all the dictionaries. Besides," he added, "how can I hide the truth? I am a gran'-puppy of two children." Soon after "Titati," the elder, was born twelve years ago, the proud, youthful-looking grandfather was telling reporters that "she was so full of personality already, she makes me sick."

II

In his makeup, Señor Iturbi combines something of the bounce and energy of the late Fiorello La Guardia with the grace and dignity of a Castilian *hidalgo*. He looks a little like his friend Charles Boyer and owns to almost as irresistible an accent. His Hollywood home is a spacious dwelling in the Spanish style with large grounds and the inevitable swimming pool. The home is filled with the superb modern paintings which Iturbi collects, including canvases of Picasso, Utrillo and Modigliani. The house also contains three grand pianos and a harpsichord.

Iturbi also owns a large orange plantation in Spain, where he is considered a wealthy landowner. "Before the war," he says, "my farm manager would write, 'Everything is fine; send money!' After the war, he writes, 'Send money — everything is

fine!' " The plantation, *Huerta de la Cottora*, is on the Mediterranean coast near the little town of Burriana, 60 kilometers north of Valencia, on the Barcelona road. It is called *Huerta de la Cottora*, or "Farm of the Parrot," because its original owners kept parrots there more than a hundred years ago.

Iturbi's wife died in Paris in 1928 and he has been fair bachelor game for marriage-minded mothers as well as lion-hunting hostesses ever since. But Iturbi prefers the company of a few close friends, like Jean Negulesco and Preston Sturges, the directors, or actors Brian Aherne and Charles Boyer. With Boyer he regularly attends the Friday night boxing matches in Hollywood. Iturbi is not only a rambunctious fight fan but a first-rate amateur boxer — a strange hobby for a pianist. He boxes daily and spends a long time punching the bag. A hanger-on at Iturbi's home for some time was Don Perone, the former New England featherweight champ, whom Iturbi used as a sparring partner. (He repaid Perone in singing and piano lessons.) Before coming to America, Iturbi was also a great lover of bullfights and thought nothing of driving 250 miles — a great distance in Spain — to attend a good *corrida*. But boxing, and flying, are Iturbi's chief passions now. "I don't think the whole world revolves around music," he says.

Iturbi is a skilled pilot, with more than 1400 solo hours, and hundreds of thousands of miles — as well as a few narrow escapes — to his credit. He recently acquired a plane similar to the one he owned before the war, a Howard single-motor four-seater — a tricky plane to fly. The day after Pearl Harbor Iturbi wrote to four of his friends — President and Mrs. Roosevelt, Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Jr., and Mayor La Guardia of New York City — offering his services for any kind of war work. He hoped to get into the Air Force, but his age prevented. He enrolled, however, in the Civilian Air Patrol, to be on call for such duties as courier, to patrol strategic areas or ferry planes. He played at camps and canteens and for bond drives, and during 1943 traveled across the country with the Hollywood Bond Cavalcade, thus earning Secretary Morgenthau's special thanks.

Iturbi's plane travel helped him maintain his terrific prewar schedule of about 200 concerts a year, which is still a record achievement in the field. Even during the war Iturbi once made seven round trips between California and New York in 32 days. He had a narrow escape from death in April 1936 when a flying boat on which he was a passenger crashed in the Bay of Trinidad. After he had been fished from the bay with only

minor scratches, Iturbi immediately asked for a piano. He had lost all his scores but he went on blithely to a concert tour of South America as if nothing had happened.

Before the war he kept an apartment in New York as well as a home in California. While on tour he would sometimes develop a sudden yen for either establishment and would immediately fly off to one, in his own or a borrowed plane. "I was in Dallas one night," Iturbi remembers, "and I think of my grandchildren. Next day I must come to Philadelphia, but I decide I want to kiss those babies again. So I fly to Beverly Hills to see them, and then I fly east."

Iturbi called his new plane, like his old one, *El Turia* — "the Touring One." The name has some talismanic appeal for Iturbi. It is the name of a river near his Valencian birthplace. It was the name of the film-house where he went to work as a child. It is the name of the corporation Iturbi has formed to manage his multiple affairs.

III

The half-million dollar annual enterprise that is José Iturbi y Baguena is a far cry from the impoverished youngster in Valencia. He was born in that city's middle-class residential section November 28, 1895. His parents were of Basque extraction. (The name Iturbi in Basque means "Two

Fountains.") Señora Iturbi, whose maiden name was Baguena, was a gifted woman, known in her circle for a fine singing voice and an ability to entertain with robust peasant stories. José inherited his skill as raconteur and mimic from her. Besides José, Señora Iturbi bore two daughters and a son. José's elder brother, now dead, was Ricardo Iturbi, a handsome, popular actor from whom José may have picked up some of his stage mannerisms. His sister Amparo — the name means "Aid" or "Assistance" — has frequently appeared with José as co-soloist and assistant recitalist in America. The two, spiritually and emotionally, are very close.

José's father was a bill collector for the Valencia Gas Company who tuned pianos in his spare time for a little supplemental income. José would toddle along on these excursions, sitting fascinated while his father struck the tuner's tentative chords. At four José began taking piano lessons with a neighborhood teacher whose fee was 25 cents an hour. The lady soon realized that she was teaching a wonder-child. When José was six he was given a Mozart sonata in a cheap edition to study. The child refused to play a certain passage as printed, and supplied his own version instead. Struck by the aptness of the six-year-old's correction, the teacher queried the Berlin Museum where the original

manuscript was kept. The museum replied that her pupil's correction corresponded exactly to the Mozart original. After that she felt she could teach him no more.

José got a job in a film-house the next year and assumed an appalling schedule for a tot. In addition to playing his twelve-hour shift until beyond midnight, he sometimes went on to play dance music for a few more pesetas. José broke away from this routine after a while, to perform at various cafés and further enhance his local reputation. When he was thirteen, a newspaperman induced the townsfolk to subscribe 1400 pesetas to send Iturbi to the Paris Conservatoire. The youth eked out the modest subsidy by playing all night in cafés, and graduated from school at seventeen with top honors. He then found employment in one of the more fashionable cafés in Zurich, where for reasons of policy he adopted the name of Herr Wassing. The director of the Geneva Conservatory heard him one day and offered him a teaching position. Iturbi, resuming his own name, spent four years at Geneva as head of the piano faculty — a post once held by Franz Liszt. Then he decided to try his luck as a concert pianist.

Iturbi's success was immediate and comprehensive. With Paris as his headquarters and Europe for his oyster, Iturbi filled in the life of a

musical celebrity with all the exotic trappings. Chanel, for instance, made not only his perfume, but also his suits and shirts. Then, in 1929, Iturbi came to the United States, somewhat unheralded, to make his American debut. He appeared first, in October, with the Philadelphia Orchestra under another colorful personality, Leopold Stokowski, and in December he made his New York bow in solo recital. Critics and audience were immediately won to him and he embarked on an American career as successful as in the Old World. In the next four years the indefatigable Iturbi gave more concerts than any other pianist had ever done, Paderewski alone excepted.

In the spring of 1933 Iturbi visited Mexico for what he admits is still the most colorful period of his life. The visit started drably enough. The Señor, with his valet and secretary, arrived in Mexico City for a modest engagement of four piano recitals. Exactly 300 people attended the first concert and Iturbi was all for taking the next plane out. But word spread rapidly that a new pianistic comet had arrived, and the next concert was played to a packed house. The music-loving Mexicans then surrendered to Iturbi as they had to no other visiting Spaniard since the days of Cortez. The four recitals were stretched until they reached the amazing total of nine-

teen. Iturbi finally ran out of programs and could think of nothing else to play. It was then that he decided to fulfill his dearest ambition and organize an orchestra.

Hiring 47 musicians, Iturbi whipped them into an orchestra in exactly a week's time. The group made its debut at the Teatro Hidalgo in Mexico City and Iturbi showed himself at once the born conductor. He rearranged works for his medium-sized ensemble and led them from the keyboard as well as the podium. The orchestra gave eleven concerts, the repertory consisting mainly of Beethoven and Mozart symphonies and concerti, with the final concert being devoted to Beethoven's Ninth.

Offers of guest-conducting engagements floated down to Iturbi from north of the border. After a long tradition of German, Russian and Polish conductors on American podia, the idea of a Spanish maestro, already famous as a pianist, apparently had something of symphonic sex appeal. In the late summer of 1933 Iturbi conducted at New York's open-air Lewisohn Stadium concerts. He also received an offer from Stokowski to conduct that fall in Philadelphia, and soon was guest leader with most of America's major orchestras.

Iturbi became regular conductor and musical director of the Rochester Symphony Orchestra in 1936, resign-

ing his post in 1944 because of his film commitments. During his tenure he did about 40 orchestral concerts a season, while maintaining his separate schedule as piano recitalist and soloist. Now he is content to make only brief concert tours in between film assignments.

IV

Unfortunately, Iturbi's prominence since he came to America has not been confined to the music and film pages. Although he has become more subdued in recent years, there was an earlier period when the good Señor constantly found himself floundering in the news sections through some hasty, heated act or outburst. During a visit to Toronto in 1937 Iturbi sounded off on women, saying, according to a Canadian Press dispatch: "Women can never hope to achieve greatness in music or sports. They are physically and temperamentally limited. I am glad to have them play and sing because it gives them a change from their domestic life. I would not keep them in a cage all the time. But achieve greatness — oh, never."

The story was pounced on by all the press wires and stirred America (its women's clubs anyway) for a full week. Editorials chided Iturbi for his ungallantry, citing Kirsten Flagstad, the singer; Myra Hess, the pianist; Sonja Henie, the skater; and Amelia

Earhart, the aviatrix, in refutation. Antonia Brico, conductor of the New York Women's Symphony Orchestra, issued a challenge to Iturbi, suggesting a contest between her orchestra and his. The Salvation Army (for reasons best known to itself) stepped into the fray, Adjutant J. Stanley Sheppard in New York confidently declaring that women had long since arrived in the musical world as artists and composers. Occupants of the first chairs in the Spitalny All-Girl Orchestra wrote an indignant, although publicity-wise, letter to the New York *Sun* in which they stated flatly that "Iturbi is decidedly behind the times." And Leonard Liebbling, editor of *Musical Courier*, dourly predicted trouble ahead for the pianist. "Records are full of achievement in music by women," he said, "and they completely refute what Mr. Iturbi so carelessly said and will live to rue."

The embarrassed Iturbi — whose indiscretions apparently stem from a hot temper rather than a coldly calculated desire for publicity — protested later that he had been misquoted. He had said, he maintained, that women were inferior to men in some spheres and superior to them in others, and that the reporter had omitted the second half of his argument.

"Latins automatically are bad boys," Iturbi once said to me, "and I am

Latin. We say something and we are misunderstood. And I can do nothing about these misquote. I cannot fight 140 million people."

The truth of the Toronto matter was that Iturbi — whose explosive utterances have frequently been set off by fuses from his personal life — had had a quarrel with his secretary (later cajoled back into his service) and had been interviewed by an enterprising reporter just as the lady had walked out on him.

Newspapers have been grateful to Iturbi for keeping them supplied with a little live copy during the summer doldrums, and have always been generous (perhaps too much so) with their space. One season Iturbi conducted at the Great Lakes Exposition in Cleveland in a program that was also to be broadcast. When Iturbi finished the concert he walked off the stage, neglecting to note there were seven minutes of broadcast time left. To the frantic engineer who pursued him for an encore Iturbi bellowed: "What do you think I am? I finish my program. Am I burlesque? Am I jazz band?" When the flustered engineer persisted, Iturbi shouted at him, "I cannot stand it here. These audience. They drink the pop! They eat the hot dogs! I cannot compete with these things."

Editors everywhere gleefully carried the story, stressing Iturbi's at-

tack on the hot dog and by inference on American eating habits in general. A chastened Iturbi defended himself later by saying, "I adore hot dogs. But at my concert, people come to stand in front of the orchestra, eating dogs and drinking pop, and stare at me like I am exhibit. How can I give my best when someone chews hot dogs and looks like that?"

Iturbi got himself similarly into two imbroglios in Philadelphia. A newspaper carried a report that the maestro had called American music trash and had refused to broadcast the music of Victor Herbert and Jerome Kern, declaring that "American music has more to say than 'Kiss Me Again.'" This pronouncement sped over the country's wires, bringing protests from indignant citizens and a demand from the American Society of Composers, Artists and Publishers that Iturbi apologize.

The real story, as usual, was far less exciting. The evening's soloist was to have sung some Herbert, Kern and George Gershwin songs with piano accompaniment on the latter half of the program, the first part of which was to be broadcast. The management shifted the program around and Iturbi protested that it was unfair to have an orchestra sitting idle for 10 or 20 minutes while only a soloist was heard on the air. He had called the idea trashy — not American music.

Few of the indignant citizens could have remembered that Iturbi had stood up belligerently for American music a few seasons before, when he practically threatened to cancel a recital program he was to play in London because a British manager asked him to eliminate some American music from it.

At various times Iturbi has seriously sounded the call for popular music. "Classical music is getting stale," he once said. "We need a new source of music, and we have found it in this country in jazz." To Iturbi such composers as Duke Ellington and Art Tatum are great musicians. "We must play their music," he says. "But it has to be played right."

"I do not want polite treatment of jazz," Iturbi said at another time. "When we play jazz in the symphony orchestra, we should not be afraid to use drums, or cymbals. We must make it sound. We must get in the groove."

Iturbi has found movies and filmmaking a great deal of fun and he has been frank to say so. He enjoys cutting up on the screen and even kidding a bit with his music. But when Iturbi walks out on a concert stage, there is no compromise. There he plays the artist straight. Iturbi has been criticized for his Hollywood horseplay, and for a certain glossy

change in his style of playing. He laughs off the first charge and vigorously denies the second. He has been taken to task before for other idiosyncrasies. His performance at a piano, for instance, conducting an orchestra from the keyboard in the playing of a concerto, has been called mere stunt-making. But Iturbi can point to other pianist-conductors, from Bruno Walter to Leonard Bernstein, who do the same thing on the symphonic podium or in the opera pit with no loss of artistry or integrity.

For all his impetuosity and fire, Iturbi is an artistic perfectionist. Musically, he is his own best critic. He sets himself a sterling standard of performance, and when, as he occasionally does, he walks off a concert platform with the comment "Iturbi played good tonight," the audience has heard an inspired performance.

Once Iturbi was asked how he studies a piece of music. "Is like a woman buying a dress," he answered. "First she sees how the dress fits her — how it is cut, the color, the line, the material. Well, first I study the score until I know it by heart, until it fits exactly — phrasing, harmony, everything. Then, what must a woman do to get a dress? She must pay for it. I pay my money too — in practice, in mastering the technique demanded. The lady wears her dress and is proud. I wear my music and am happy."

THE FARMERS MILK THE PUBLIC TREASURY

BY SAM SHULSKY

THE time has come for a showdown with the farm bloc. Judging from the sell-out of the American consumer in the first session of the Eighty-first Congress, somebody will have to organize a pressure group for the four fifths of our population which is still paying wartime peak prices for its food. Every other basic industry has settled down to the give-and-take of a buyer's market, but the farm minority is still, with congressional sanction, keeping its prices artificially inflated.

There was, it is true, some element of conflict in the discussions which led to the final passage of the farm bill. Percentage figures indicating various support levels for farm products were added, subtracted, averaged, and altogether thrown around in great heat. But at no time was there any indication that the political leadership of either party had turned to realism, had forsaken its Utopian promise that the American farmer would hence-

forth and forevermore be prosperous — prosperous beyond the dreams of any other working man. At adjournment time, when the smoke of the make-believe battle had cleared, it was found that Congress had reaffirmed its old position: the farmer's living standard was to be guaranteed by the taxpayers at the level he attained in America's golden age of agriculture. On October 31, President Truman made it law. The farm bloc had again demonstrated its ability to bounce back.

As far back as the spring of 1948, the "inside dope" was that a "more realistic attitude is likely on farm supports." A lowering of supports to the old AAA levels of 52 to 75 per cent of parity was widely forecast. In fact, some even predicted that supports on a substantial list of items would disappear at the end of 1948. At that time, Congress extended the parity program another year. Even so, the cautious Dow Jones news

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service reported from Washington that the end was drawing near. "A move is quietly afoot among congressmen," it said on August 21, 1948, "to tackle the high cost of living next January by shortening the props under farm prices."

As recently as last October, the Senate passed the Anderson bill which favored a sliding scale of price supports instead of the rigid 90 per cent support then in force. The New York *Times* warmly praised the "integrity" of the upper chamber for resisting President Truman's endorsement of the higher support level. But hardly had the rumble of its presses died down before the Washington wires were carrying the report that the provision had been defeated and that, despite the Democratic party's campaign oratory, the 90 per cent program had won.

The farmer was once more encouraged to produce, not for the market, but for what he could get out of the government. It was a great day for the food speculator, too. The Associated Press reported, in technical jargon which will be reflected nonetheless in 1950 grocery bills, that: "Wheat — closed firm; advanced on Senate-House conferees agreement on farm bill. Corn — firm; advanced with wheat. Oats — strong; up with other grains. Hogs — mostly 25 cents higher. Cattle — 50 cents higher."

II

The philosophy that the farmer is entitled to enjoy all the benefits of the private-enterprise system, but be subject to none of its vicissitudes, came into the national thinking in much humbler form in the early days of the New Deal. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration, the Triple-A of early Roosevelt days, was dedicated to saving agriculture from the widespread bankruptcies that came with surplus crops and low prices. Its remedy was to boost prices by reducing the crops — the famous payments to farmers for the killing of little pigs, still one of the best examples of stupidity in a well-meaning government. Perhaps there was no time for better-considered measures. The farmer had taken to the road with his pitchfork to protest his lot.

With the gradual spread of a "riskless" philosophy, the farm bloc discovered "parity" in 1938 and arrived at a fixed price-support program in 1942. In less than a decade, the country's farm philosophy had undergone a complete reversal. What had started as a plan to save the farmer from bankruptcy became a scheme for raising him to the highest living standards in his history — and keeping him there. It was done through smart and timely political maneuvering. The clincher came in the 1942

Congress, when, with food of vital importance for ourselves and our allies, the farm bloc got what it wanted. No one was in a position to argue the point. Congress that year gave the American farmer a guarantee that the government would support the prices of major farm products until two years after the war. That deadline was reached more than two years ago. But the end is nowhere in sight.

It's all done with the magic word "parity." This measuring concept was evolved in the late 1930s, when farm prices were struggling up out of the morass of depression. In response to a demand for a comprehensive statistical index of agricultural prices, the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 defined parity as "that price for the commodity which will give to it a purchasing power [in the articles farmers buy] equivalent to the purchasing power of such commodity in the base period."

Thus, if a farmer was able to buy a shirt with the proceeds of the sale of two bushels of corn during a period accepted as a fair standard, he should henceforth be guaranteed this purchasing power. For many commodities, this base covers the period August 1909 through July 1914, a period free from major economic and political disturbance and characterized by relative stability in all prices.

This period, says the Federal Reserve Bank, "was generally a favorable one for agriculture."

In computing parity, the first step was to determine the average price received by the farmer during the base period. For instance, wheat averaged 88.4 cents a bushel at that time, corn 64.2 cents a bushel, and cotton 12.4 cents a pound. Parity levels for other commodities were based on later periods, owing to the lack of adequate price data before World War I, to extensive changes in consumer demand, or, as New York's Federal Reserve Bank blandly puts it, "to the influence of pressure groups seeking a more favorable base period for their product."

As a second step, an index of prices paid by the farmer was arrived at by computing retail prices for 86 items used in family living (food, clothing, furniture, household supplies, etc.) and 96 items used in farm production (feed, fertilizer, machinery, etc.). In late 1949, the parity formula entitled the farmer to roughly two and one half times as much for his products as he got during the base period. If the free market for farm products falls 10 per cent below that level, it reaches the "support" level at which the government is pledged to step in and either buy or lend. If the government lends, the farmer has the choice of repaying the loan and reclaiming

his produce (if the price subsequently goes up) or of keeping the money and letting the government keep his produce (if the price fails to rally). In either event, he has a call on the government to buy his produce at a price based on the wonderful days of 1909-1914.

Nothing, of course, has been done about the fact that the farmer's labor time for growing and harvesting wheat, for example, has declined 60 per cent since the base period was set, or that potato production per acre has increased about fourfold. Nor has any erudite government economist exposed one absurdity in the system: since food itself is part of the parity index, the farmer is in the enviable position of raising his economic plane by his own bootstraps.

III

The results of such a program, sold to the American people in a time of great stress (at a time, in fact, when even labor — which is no shrinking violet — pledged it would not strike to better itself) are many, and varied, and all bad. Bad, that is, for the four fifths of us who do not live on farms.

In the first place, there are the perils to our entire economy inherent in fitting such an inelastic policy to one of our basic needs. In the second place, there is the dishonesty involved in allowing a special group to profit at

the expense of all. And finally, there is the simple objection that such arbitrary controls have solved nothing in the past and offer no proof that they will work any better in the future.

As to the farm program's place in the current national economy: The ending of every major war brings with it a market readjustment which must spread throughout the entire business structure before the economic distortions of war can be corrected. Those who have watched the markets since the end of World War II have seen one war-incurred shortage after another eliminated. As more watches, and radios, and textiles, and luggage, came onto the market, these items went through the price wringer until they reached a point at which buyer and seller could meet with no great advantage to either side. Then came the "hard goods" — refrigerators, washing machines, stoves, and, more recently, automobiles and construction materials. Price ceilings were removed because they were no longer necessary. The American ability to produce had once more asserted the workability of the law of supply and demand. Labor itself was no exception. Overtime disappeared. Pay-rise demands were shelved in favor of pensions, and productivity was increased. All branches of the economy worked off the excesses, the imbalances, the dislocations, created in war-

time. All, that is, except agriculture. The result has been that industry, trying to readjust itself to peacetime conditions, has been stymied by the fact that the biggest single item in its workers' budget is still on the wartime level.

How honest is a program which insists that four fifths of the people be taxed so that one fifth shall be perennially prosperous? The Taft-Hartley labor law was enacted because, its backers claimed, labor had so joined forces that it constituted a monopoly and must therefore be restricted. Yet many legislators who voted for that law evidently find no difficulty in swallowing a theory that grants, in fact, insures one fifth of the population a peak standard of living at the expense of the remainder. Why should not the factory worker select as a base period the year 1945, say, during which his wage and living-cost ratio was the most favorable, and then fight to freeze that as his right for all time? What would not the descendants of America's great fortune-builders give if they could still accumulate money the way their fathers and grandfathers did in the income-tax-free days before 1913?

IV

The transfer to government of the power to decide how much food shall be raised, and at what prices, has

raised the prospect of a new agricultural bureaucracy. Extravagance, both in money and foodstuffs, seems to be inherent in the supplanting of natural laws by government *fiat*. Hundreds of millions of dollars raised by taxation have been used since the war to keep the price of eggs out of the reach of millions of small wage-earners to the end that poultry-farmers should receive somewhere around \$285 million more than they could otherwise have netted, and that government should have millions of pounds of eggs on its hands which, Secretary of Agriculture Brannan sorrowfully admitted, "are going to begin to smell soon."

The odor will not be merely that of bad eggs. The same can be said for the potato program, which has taken hundreds of millions of dollars annually. Gilbert and Sullivan could never have imagined the doings that have marked the government's feverish attempts to keep the potato growers happy. Ever since 1943, the government has been paying growers increasing sums to take their potatoes off the market. It started at \$1.80 per hundred-pound bag and has now gone up to \$2.90. The Department of Agriculture itself admits to many fantastic stories. In one case, it paid a Maine grower \$2.90 per bag and then shipped the vegetables to Chicago, where it sold the bags, which now cost \$4 each, to hog

raisers, for one cent each. One shrewd Illinois farmer paid \$18 for 1800 bags of potatoes which had cost the taxpayers \$7200. He fed the potatoes to his hogs, producing pork worth \$28 a hundredweight, and then sold the 1800 bags at 10 cents each. In another such deal, the government bought a cheaper grade of potato at \$1.55 a bushel, planning to convert it into flour for European relief. It paid 40 cents a bushel more to ship it to the flour manufacturers, to whom it turned over the bushel, now worth \$1.95, for 9 cents. After the millers had turned the potatoes into flour, the U. S. paid them 70 cents for the flour derived from each bushel. Thus the government paid \$2.65 for each 10 pounds of potato flour — almost five times, incidentally, what it would have had to pay for wheat flour. Of course, tax money was not always wasted with so little regard for simple arithmetic. Where economy-minded public servants could intervene in time, they simply bought the potatoes, soaked them with kerosene and set the whole mess afire. Only the cost of the potatoes and kerosene was thus lost, which should be some comfort to the housewife who is still paying slightly more than twice as much for potatoes as she did before the war.

In some such fashion, the government in the last fifteen years has been pouring out an average of a billion

dollars a year. Now, of course, the rate has gone up. Last year it ran to around \$2 billion. Estimates of the proposed Brannan program's cost ran to \$5 billion. Nobody really knows. Evidently nobody really cares.

For the blatant stupidity which often accompanies bureaucratic attempts to regulate economic law is matched only by the arrogance with which such programs are propounded and then pushed forward to enactment. The farm program may once have been a scheme for saving the farmer from foreclosure and poverty. It is today, frankly, a scheme for keeping him prosperous in return for his support at the polls. While the Republicans are generally credited with having a slight edge in the matter of restraint in shoveling out taxpayers' money, any difference on this issue between the two parties is so slight that it is often lost sight of in the heat of congressional debate. When both parties had their farm-policy meetings in Des Moines, the farmers' vote was the primary goal. When, during the late days of the last session, there was some sentiment for at least putting support prices on a sliding scale, President Truman, said dispatches from Washington, "cautioned Democratic farm leaders of Congress against lower price supports . . . lest the party lose the farm vote in future elections."

The farmers themselves have become so accustomed to claiming government support as their right that they can laud the farm as the last bulwark of free enterprise and at the same time demand government support. The dairy groups, perhaps, are the brassiest of all in their approach to national economics. In delivering a stirring speech against the use of margarine by the armed forces, Senator Wiley of Wisconsin first praised the dairy farmer as the best example extant of free enterprise, and then proceeded directly to the argument that since the government was already supporting butter at 62 cents a pound, use of margarine would only leave more butter to be artificially supported by tax funds. And with the government already having taken up 90 million pounds of butter, and millions of dollars worth of cheese and skimmed milk to enhance dairymen's income, the Dairymen's League Cooperative of New York had the nerve to go on record against Federal deficit spending.

v

What is the state of this industry which insists it is entitled to handouts from the public treasury?

According to the Federal Reserve System, agriculture's assets now stand at an all-time high. In 1949, physical assets were valued at \$105 billion and

financial assets at almost \$22 billion. This total of \$127 billion was more than two and one third times better than the prewar position. Annual income is running better than three times the prewar average.

Some of the elements making up these totals tell an astounding story. Real estate assets, for instance, have nearly doubled since 1940; they now total \$65 billion, while mortgages on these holdings have dropped from \$6.5 billion to about \$5 billion. In fact, seven of every ten farms are now owned free and clear. The value of machinery has more than trebled, and is now at \$11 billion; cash went from slightly under \$4 billion to nearly \$15 billion; holdings of government bonds from \$250,000 to more than \$5 billion. In sum, the farmers' net worth jumped from just under \$44 billion to more than \$116 billion.

Thanks to the support program, prices continue high even though there have been inadequate facilities for storing all the crops the farmers have tendered the government. The Truman administration saw its opportunity and won surprising farm support in the 1948 elections by easing storage requirements. As a result, the Federal Reserve points out, payments to farmers continue to increase steadily. Of the 1288 million bushels of wheat harvested in 1948-1949, 368 million bushels were at one time under

loan to the government; when the commitments matured in the spring of 1949, the government wound up buying 266 million bushels; 3.8 million bales of the 14.6-million bale cotton crop went to the government, and nearly the same proportion of the corn crop.

Quite possibly, a few farmers on the ragged edge, or among the less efficient producers, needed this money badly. But it should be pointed out that two thirds of all the money spent by the government in this area went to one fifth of the nation's farmers. And the size of some of the individual checks should destroy any illusion that the recipients were hanging on the ropes financially. Individual payments for cotton in the South, and for wheat and corn in the midwest, ran into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. But again it was the lowly potato which demonstrated how government can really dish it out when it sets its mind to it.

Sixteen per cent of the country's potato crop is harvested in Maine, mostly in Aroostook County. Its population is 100,000 persons and 5300 potato farms, owned and operated by 4500 families and companies. These growers got no less than \$67 million out of the more than \$200 million our government spent last year to support potato prices. Thirty-one farmers got checks ranging from

\$100,000 to better than \$450,000 each; 146 were paid \$50,000 to \$100,000; 468 got \$25,000 to \$50,000; and 1200 got \$15,000 to \$25,000. Divide the total \$67 million equally among the 4500 growers and you get an average of *better than \$14,000 each!* The net loss on potatoes in 1949 averaged out at *\$4 million a week!* Wealthy cotton growers in the South, who usually don't invite Federal intervention in their way of living, took the big payment checks with as much alacrity as Down East Yankee individualists.

In view of the steady drift toward government intervention and support (the latter of which even big business seems to welcome) it does not appear likely that the farmer will ever be cut adrift to fend for himself any more than the slum dweller in the city. In a broad-scale approach to making this a better country, neither should be. Agriculture, being an essential industry and yet one subject to the unpredictable factors of flood, drought, heat and cold, should be guaranteed some safeguards by government. The important point is that these guarantees should not be of perpetual boom-time prosperity in return for votes, but rather of the same chance to make a living that any man has, plus the insurance factors that go with a hazardous business.

That's as far as it should go.

THE CASE FOR OSTEOPATHY

BY DONALD B. THORBURN, D.O., PH.D.

Millions of people in this country and elsewhere have sought the services of osteopathic physicians. When a healing art has achieved such wide acceptance, it is the duty of an alert democratic press to discuss it openly and fairly. It is in the spirit of such fair play, and in the tradition of vital American journalism as well, that THE AMERICAN MERCURY has thrown open its pages to the discussion of this healing art. Dr. Thorburn is eminently qualified to state the case for osteopathy. A graduate of the Philadelphia College of Osteopathy in 1923, he has been in the general practice of osteopathy in New York for 26 years and is a member of the New York State Board of Medical Examiners. Dr. Wassersug is equally qualified to present the arguments of orthodox medicine against osteopathy. He is a practicing physician in Quincy, Mass., an instructor in medicine at Tufts Medical College, and is the author of two books: Your Rheumatism and Backaches and Your Coughs, Colds, and Wheezes.

IN KANSAS, in the 1870s, a country doctor using unorthodox methods began to make cripples walk, to cure men with dysentery, and to help asthmatics take their first comfortable breaths in years. He worked his cures not with the usual drugs but with manipulation of the body.

"The body is a machine," said Dr. Andrew Taylor Still, the country doctor, who founded osteopathy, "and if the body machine is in proper adjustment, it will function correctly. Furthermore, the normal human body makes its own remedies against infections and other toxic agents, but only when the body is structurally correct, can it make such remedies

and distribute them where needed."

These were the days when Pasteur was being hounded for teaching that germs caused disease and Lister laughed at for trying to introduce aseptic surgery. Still's theory had the effect of a Kansas cyclone in a section where patients were bled, blistered, purged, vomited and dosed with mercury, antimony and other compounds. He was vilified, called an insane quack, and accused, like Faust, of having sold his soul to the devil.

Born in 1828, Still had been brought up on the frontier. He was the son of a Methodist medical missionary who, when Still was 25, went to Kansas to care for the Shawnee

Indians. Young Still, ambitious to follow in the footsteps of his father, went along as an assistant. That is, he assisted his father by day; at night, he added to his medical knowledge by robbing the graves and dissecting the bodies of those aborigines who, despite the Still family's best efforts, had departed this life.

Young Dr. Still married, had several children, and, in 1861, went off to war as a Union soldier. In 1864, soon after his discharge, three of his children died of spinal meningitis. We are not told whether astringents, sedatives, or blood-letting was used, but then and there Still vowed to find a better way of curing disease. He worked unceasingly for ten years, and in 1874 he announced the principles of a new philosophy of healing. He named the new science *Osteopathy*.

Run out of Kansas for his medical heresy, Still took refuge in Missouri, where, after the manner of a Methodist circuit rider, he "itinerated" from town to town, putting his theories into practice. "Disease," he proclaimed, "can be combated through manipulation of bones and muscles and ligaments, which, by normalizing the human machine, will give freedom to nerve impulses and assure unimpeded circulation." People generally were vague as to what he was talking about, but he

began to work some amazing cures, and his "miracles" spoke louder than his words.

At Hannibal, Mo., the home of Mark Twain, Still was brought into court. He was charged with having omitted to register in the county. But his actual crime was helping patients who had been pronounced incurable by the physicians of Marion County. The jury, composed largely of friends and relatives of his cured patients, acquitted him. By now he had become so well known that his headquarters at Kirksville were constantly packed with the afflicted who sought his help.

Many were still undecided about him. Like Dr. J. B. Mitchell, a Presbyterian minister of Kirksville, who refused to allow his little daughter, crippled and bedridden by a fall from a tree years before, to see Dr. Still. When the minister was called away one time, his wife promptly asked Dr. Still to come—at night. After the girl had a few treatments—involving, mainly, relaxation of deep muscle contractions in the lower back—the father returned, and his daughter walked downstairs to greet him.

There was the Kansas City teenager who injured her hip defending her high school high-kicking championship. Diagnosed as having a tuberculous hip joint, she had been in a cast for six weeks when Dr. Still was

called. He reduced (normalized) a subluxated (partially dislocated) sacroiliac joint and, the girl, hardly believing it herself, walked across the room. Thereafter, she had an uneventful recovery. This was still in the 1880s, and it is worthy of note that until 1903 the medical profession stoutly maintained that the sacroiliac joint was immovable.

All sorts of cases came to Kirksville for treatment. Bloody dysentery, epilepsy, arthritis, skin diseases, eye troubles, deafness — one and all they came. Some insisted that Still's successes were really faith cures. But then there were children, like John Simler's baby, who were healed of disfiguring skin eruptions, or who were successfully treated for disfigurements caused by falls, birth injuries, or nutritional disturbances. Faith was clearly not important there. Then, too, the State Insane Asylum at Nevada, Mo., was the scene of some startling recoveries, and it is doubtful that faith could have played much part in these.

By this time, Dr. Still had trained his three sons as assistants, but he was far from able to take care of the great numbers of people converging on Kirksville. He decided to begin training other osteopaths. In October 1892, in a small, one-room frame building, seventeen young men and women met to begin the study of os-

teopathy. One legacy from Still's Methodist up-bringing cropped out in the pre-professional requirement that his students must not use alcohol, chew tobacco, or swear. The school's first charter read: "To improve our systems of surgery, midwifery and treatment of general disease."

II

The small shack that housed the original class has grown into six large, fully equipped osteopathic colleges inspected regularly by the American Osteopathic Association. The seventeen students have grown into 1700 now being trained in the techniques of osteopathic manipulative therapy, surgery, the use of drugs, and all other recognized diagnostic and therapeutic procedures. The minimum pre-professional requirement is two years of college. The curricula of all osteopathic colleges are similar to those of medical schools, except that they also include instruction in osteopathic techniques. The osteopathic concept, which pervades all teaching in the osteopathic colleges, is fundamentally the same as it was when Dr. Still taught the first students.

It was taught that the human body is a complete machine, perfectly adapted to the ends of living; that the primary cause of disease is usually found in structural defects within the organism which prevent the body

machine from working normally; that muscles which are tense, and any joint structures concerned in subluxations and strains, will cause congestion, relative acidosis, disturbed nerves, pain, and interference with reflexes and circulation.

The structural defect is called by osteopathic physicians a "lesion." A lesion may be in a joint, or in muscular, ligamentous, fascial, or other tissue. Osteopathic research has proved that the *spinal* lesion (a lesion which involves a spinal vertebra or spinal soft tissue) results in a disordered nerve supply to whatever tissue or organ is supplied by the nerves involved. A spinal subluxation may, therefore, disturb the heart's rhythm. And it may disturb the functioning of the stomach, or of the kidneys, or of any organ with which it is in reflex connection.

The osteopathic physician does not stop there. He uses serums and vaccines as they are indicated. He prescribes necessary drugs when their use is of definite value. He orders bacteriostatic agents — agents which stop the growth of germs in the body — and the antibiotics (penicillin, streptomycin, aureomycin, etc.), where the patient's condition warrants them. He uses the tools of careful surgical diagnosis and surgical skill where they are needed. He leaves no stone unturned in attempting to

help nature restore the patient to health.

An osteopathic physician reduces a subluxated vertebra simply and easily by using the principle underlying all body movement — that of leverage. Following relaxation of the contracted tissue in the neighborhood of the lesioned vertebra by gentle muscle manipulation, the osteopathic physician, making use of one method of replacement, causes the patient to bend slightly to the right or left, thus exaggerating the spaces between the vertebrae. It is then a simple matter to rock the vertebra into place, as one would close a reluctant dresser drawer.

When the "lesion" is a contraction or a nodular spasm of a muscle, the osteopathic physician is able to locate the trouble, however minute it may be. With gentle, but specific, manipulation he softens the contraction to the point at which blood can re-enter the muscle in normal quantity. The circulation does the rest. The contracted muscle relaxes. The osteopathic physician merely gets things out of nature's way.

You may have heard that osteopathic physicians are rough. Perhaps at times they were. The discoverer of osteopathy was noted for his gentleness, but some of his earlier followers, filled with the crusading spirit and being of an especially virile breed, made use of methods which were,

let us say, robust. They, too, got good results, but the end of the treatment was likely to find the patient hanging on for dear life and wondering which way the tornado had gone.

All this has changed. Osteopathic physicians have found that "easy does it." Osteopathy has perfected its methods to the point where an osteopathic treatment is no longer to be approached with trepidation, like a visit to the dentist, but is usually a very pleasant experience.

III

How does osteopathic medicine differ from allopathic medicine? Once the answer would have been a simple one, *i.e.*, that the osteopath (unlike the orthodox doctor) looks upon the body as a machine which must be structurally correct for the body to be in a state of health. That the emphasis, in treatment, must be placed on the repair of structural abnormalities by physical means, and that drugs or surgery must be resorted to only when necessary.

Old-school medicine, it could once have been said, looks upon the body from a chemical standpoint and treats disease by putting into the body substances which are believed to heal it. It could have been said that, except perhaps for surgery, there was no such thing as a mechanical approach to the body. These generalizations are no

longer true. Now, as a result of osteopathic teachings, there is, within the allopathic profession, a great movement away from drugs and toward *physical medicine*. Osteopathy is glad to see this trend, but wonders a little why allopathy is so loath to acknowledge the fact it owes many of its discoveries in physical medicine to its foster-child, osteopathy.

As for chiropractic, there are certain points of similarity between it and osteopathy. This is not surprising when one considers that, according to the daughter of A. T. Still, Palmer, the discoverer of chiropractic, came to Kirksville in 1893, took many treatments from Still, sat at his dinner table on several occasions, talked with Still's students, and was treated by some of them. Not long afterwards, Palmer discovered chiropractic.

From the beginning, osteopathy has treated all parts of the body. Chiropractic limits its treatment to the spine. Chiropractic uses no drugs, rejects the germ theory of disease, and claims that all disease originates from pressure on spinal nerves caused by subluxations of spinal vertebrae. It maintains, therefore, that the *alpha* and *omega* of treatment lies in the replacement of the subluxated vertebra.

Osteopathic colleges and hospitals are equipped to train specialists, and

among the eleven thousand osteopathic physicians, all specialties are represented. Yet osteopathy has not lost sight of the general practitioner, or family doctor.

The osteopathic general practitioner realizes that he is the public's first line of defense, and keeps informed of scientific advances in the field of medicine. This is particularly true in respect to an understanding of psychosomatic medicine. He can recognize that the businessman who has nervous indigestion is probably suffering from a psychosomatic condition and may, if not properly treated, go on to colitis or ulcer. He can recognize that the woman who suffers from blinding headaches may be the victim of a worried mind. He is aware that many conditions affecting the heart, the lungs, the kidneys, the sex organs, or the skin, or which result in high blood pressure, may be of psychic origin, and he treats the patient accordingly.

The osteopathic physician will look for the factor which decides why one person will have an ulcer and another have severe headaches when the sources of their ailments are substantially the same. He will often find that factor to be an osteopathic lesion.

By removing the lesion before it begins to irritate, by relaxing his patient, by improving his patient's men-

tal attitude, the osteopathic physician may be able to prevent the ulcer, the severe headaches, or any of the other psychosomatic conditions, from developing at all. Since most psychosomatic disease stems originally from nervous irritation and tension, when the physician reduces the lesion and helps the patient to relax, he will thereby prevent the physical ailment which normally results.

In respect to psychosis, one of the larger institutions for the osteopathic care of the mentally ill, found, in a series of 1000 cases of schizophrenia, that the majority of spinal lesions involved were in the upper three cervical (neck) segments. The circulation of the brain is largely controlled by nerves that leave this section of the spinal cord. Both medical and osteopathic research workers state that an impaired brain circulation will cause psychiatric symptoms. The normalization of upper cervical lesions is a first step toward improving brain circulation.

The number-one killer, heart disease, is usually responsive to osteopathy, a therapy that is especially useful in the treatment of any coronary disease in which angina pectoris is a factor. If the coronary arteries are unable to supply enough blood to support the activity of the heart muscle, anginal pain results. The coronary arteries are under the control of

nerves which, when irritated, cause contraction of these arteries and a depressed supply of blood to the heart. Osteopathic treatment, by removing irritating conditions — spinal, visceral, muscular, etc. — in reflex connection with the nerves controlling the coronary arteries, and by helping the patient to relax, probably prevents many cases of coronary “insufficiency” which would result in angina. Osteopathy, of course, combines with its manipulative treatment all that is useful of the customary medical therapy.

In the post-coronary state, when all signs of shock have disappeared, osteopathic treatment, administered gently to the dorsal (upper back) region of the spine, aids in better aeration of the lungs. It does this by increasing the thoracic respiratory excursion with a concomitant increase in oxygenation of the blood — a most important detail, since the patient is suffering from a lack of oxygen in the heart muscle.

IV

Does osteopathy believe in surgery? Of course it does. Surgery was included in the curriculum of the first osteopathic college. Surgery is a recognized specialty in the osteopathic school of practice. However, much of the pathology which causes the patient to undergo surgery is the result

of disordered body functioning due to structural abnormalities. The surgical removal of the pathology does not, in the case of the osteopathic lesion, remove the cause; therefore, the structural lesion should be removed either before or after operation.

Post-operative osteopathic treatment, in addition to normalizing structures which were either defective before the operation or appeared as a result of the operation, is directed toward normalizing the action of those nerves which supply the organs involved in surgery; toward removing the toxic effects of the anesthetic; and toward promoting the comfort of the patient generally.

The discussion of surgery recalls a case in obstetrical practice which illustrates the ability of osteopathy to help the body carry on its normal functions. A mother consulted an obstetrician of the osteopathic school. This patient had had two children, both normal, but both born after long and difficult labors. The prospective mother had two questions. Would osteopathic pre-natal care reduce the time and discomfort of her labors, and, if so, would there be a danger of miscarriage or premature labor? The patient was reassured on both points. She received short treatments twice a week during most of her pregnancy. She went through an uneventful pre-natal period, marked only by a feeling

of well-being. When labor came, to her delight it lasted just about four hours.

This was not an unusual case. One series of 500 cases, reviewed recently, showed the following: for 250 women in their first pregnancies who had been treated osteopathically, the average length of the first stage of labor was 5 hours, as compared with the over-all average of 14 to 18 hours. For women who had already borne children, the average was 4 hours and 18 minutes, as compared with an average of 10 to 12 hours for the untreated cases.

The main event of the first stage of labor is the effacement and dilatation of the cervix. Osteopathic manipulative treatment during the pre-natal period apparently helps to maintain a normal blood and nerve supply to the uterus, so that at the time of labor there is a minimal swelling of the cervix; and this, in turn, facilitates the processes of effacement and dilatation of the cervix. Thus the first stage of labor is shortened considerably.

Recently, a Canadian woman osteopath reported on the cases of three young patients who had received no help from orthodox methods but who, after patient and painstaking care, did respond to manipulative treatment:

Mary, a beautiful little two-and-a-

half-year-old child, seemed completely cut off from her surroundings. She could not walk, or even stand, and she could not use her right arm. Lesions in the neck and lower back, possibly the result of injuries at birth, were the cause of Mary's condition. After thirteen months of consistent treatment, Mary began to walk, though with a slight limp. She is not only aware of her surroundings, but laughs happily and plays with toys. She is beginning to say words, and takes delight in learning new things.

Bobby, a four-year-old, suffered from deafness. He could hear only shrill sounds, like a train whistle or a dog's bark. After several months of treatment, Bobby's hearing improved materially. He now attends kindergarten and is enjoying it tremendously. A lesion in the neck, perhaps from a birth injury or a fall, proved to be the cause of Bobby's deafness.

Patty, eleven months old, could not hold up her head, sit alone, or control the use of her hands. After a month of treatment, she began to improve. Now, several months later, Patty uses her hands well enough to get them into everything she shouldn't. She can stand and walk by holding on to furniture, and can take an occasional step unaided. Like little Mary, Patty had lesions in the neck and lower back; when they were cor-

rected, her body began to cure itself.

These are run-of-the-mine cases to the osteopathic physician who works with children.

v

Even many medical physicians feel that the best treatment for the average backache is osteopathic. It is, but not for the reason — that of giving local relief to the back — which prompts them to send more and more of their patients to osteopaths. The medical attitude is that osteopathic physicians should remain chained to the back, like Prometheus to the rock.

An osteopath is the physician best qualified to treat a lame or painful back. But since he is an expert diagnostician, patients who come to him with backaches are apt to get much more than localized treatment. For example, the records of an osteopathic general practitioner showed that among twelve patients who consulted him for backache, the following conditions were discovered: one case of "floating" (ptosed) kidney, an ovarian cyst, two cases of spastic colon, one retroflexed uterus, one herniated disc, one case of fallen arches, a sacroiliac subluxation, one case of short leg (a type of structural lesion discovered by osteopaths in 1921 and overcome by a lift in the shoe of the shorter leg), one case of

degenerative arthritis, and two cases of simple back-strain.

In each case, the localized areas of tenderness in the back were relieved by treatment. But, beyond this, each patient received the proper therapy for his particular affliction. The osteopathic physician can almost always relieve an uncomfortable back, but, knowing the potentialities, he looks further to discover ultimate causes.

It was mentioned that one case of "backache" was basically degenerative arthritis. Actually, X-ray films showed that about half of the cases gave evidence of an arthritic condition affecting the spinal articulations. Osteopathic manipulation is the therapy of choice in the local treatment of the arthritic back but, helpful though it is, the osteopathic physician does not rely on physical methods alone. As a matter of fact, he does not rely on any single method.

Osteopathy believes that arthritis is not just a disease of joints and muscles, but, rather, that it represents a widespread degenerative process which involves such systems as the blood-circulatory, the nervous, and the endocrine. Osteopathy believes that most of the effects of the arthritic state come by way of the autonomic nervous system, the system that governs the unconscious functioning of the body.

In line with this belief, the osteo-

path will search for some abnormality which, affecting the involuntary nervous system, is causing the impairment of joints and muscles known as arthritis. He will examine each system of the body. He will examine the spine, for spinal lesions may be important as centers which broadcast their irritations to internal organs. He will investigate for possible psychic stress and emotional unbalance, for these latter, it is now realized, can, by over-stimulating the involuntary nervous system, cause arthritis. In addition, he will examine for postural strains, for they too are important in developing the arthritic state.

Arthritis should be treated painstakingly and comprehensively or not at all. Having this attitude, is it any wonder that osteopaths are slightly suspicious of the so-called "miracle drugs"?

VI

Through research, osteopathy is working hard to give greater service. The six colleges of osteopathy, plus the Osteopathic Research Laboratory at Los Angeles, are all deep in research programs. Some projects center about the effect of disturbances in the involuntary nervous system resulting in alterations in circulation and gland or visceral activity. Others relate to the effects of fatigue and chemical irritation on voluntary muscles. Still others

are in the sphere of food and nutrition.

Even more ambitious programs are taking shape. They range far and wide in search of means to benefit public health. So clearly is this recognized by the United States government that grants-in-aid are now received for the Kirksville College of Osteopathy and Surgery research program, from Federal sources.

Osteopathy, 75 years after its evolution from orthodox medicine, sees the great majority of states accord osteopathic physicians equal opportunity with physicians of the orthodox school of medicine. The Federal government also accords complete recognition to osteopathy in the Veterans Administration, under the U. S. Workmen's Compensation Act, and in the Department of Public Health. Osteopathic colleges are accredited educational institutions for government-provided programs for veterans.

Organized medicine's attitude toward osteopathy has changed since that day in the early eighties when A. T. Still was brought into court at Hannibal. In March 1946, a bill which would remove all restrictions from the practice of osteopathy was before the New York State Legislature. This bill, like the laws in most states, would allow an osteopathic physician to perform major surgery or use any

drug or modality which he felt would help in his treatment. At that time, the State Medical Society sent a letter to each legislator. The letter asked support for the legislation on the grounds that osteopathic educa-

tion meets the standards for the practice of medicine. The bill passed unanimously and the Governor's signature made it law. There is no longer any doubt that osteopathy is here to stay.

THE MEDICAL POSITION—A REPLY

BY JOSEPH D. WASSERSUG, M.D.

As a practicing physician, I believe that I may be pardoned if I do not share Dr. D. B. Thorburn's enthusiasm for osteopathy. This conviction—that osteopathy is not the therapeutic wonder claimed by its proponents—has been forced upon me gradually over the years. As a matter of fact, my first contact with osteopathy was deeply personal, and I almost became a convert.

It was a hot summer day when my mother bent over and wrenched her back so severely that she had great difficulty in straightening up. I was an embryo physician at that time, having just received my M.D. degree. I immediately called our regular physician to see my mother. He applied some traction to her legs, put bed-boards under her mattress and prescribed codeine for her pain. Two or three days went by and my mother was still in pain. Our physician could

offer nothing from the standpoint of quick relief. At his suggestion, an osteopath was called.

I remember his arrival quite vividly. He was a short, stocky man, dressed in a dark suit and carrying a little black bag. He had a goatee and a mustache, perhaps in worshipful imitation of Andrew Taylor Still, the founder of osteopathy. His manner was confident and self-assured. He lightly touched my mother's back, then turned toward me and said, "She has a partial rotation of the fourth lumbar on the fifth lumbar vertebra." I was astounded.

Here was a man who was able, by simply touching my mother's back, to provide me with a diagnosis that I knew was difficult to make even when the finest X-ray studies were available. There must be more to osteopathy than I had ever imagined!

Then, the doctor flipped my mother

this way and that, twisted her hither and yon, and commanded her to get out of bed and walk. It was amazing. My mother got out of bed, walked around, and said she felt no pain. I was convinced that I had to learn more about osteopathy. Here, before my own skeptical eyes, was a convincing demonstration of its value.

My enthusiasm was short-lived. The next morning, my mother was in the most frightful agony that she had ever experienced. Instead of the dull, gnawing pain that she had had before my call to the osteopath, her pain was now acute, her agony intense. This time I phoned one of my instructors in orthopedic surgery. He put my mother in a plaster cast from her knees up to her chest. She remained in the cast for six weeks, and then slowly improved. My confidence in osteopathy was weakened.

Dr. Thorburn's article leaves one with the general impression that the osteopath takes over where the physician fails. He cites several cases where one person or another received no help by "orthodox methods," yet was cured by osteopathy. The reader may be left with the inference that what his regular doctor cannot do the osteopath can. More often than not, I believe, the shoe is on the other foot. More often than not, the physician has to rescue his osteopathic colleagues from embarrassing situations.

Let me cite just two more cases, although I am sure that any physician has many such instances in his own files.

Mrs. M. C. K. had been ill for two months with pain in the hips and back. A constant procession of osteopaths had been in and out of her home, treating her "lesions" and "subluxations." They realized that this 62-year-old woman was nervous, and so they also provided her with various nerve "tonics." After two months of therapy, in which it was quite obvious that she was failing, a regular physician was called because one of the osteopaths began to worry about a possible diagnosis of cancer.

When this patient was examined from the medical standpoint, she was found to be disoriented, confused, and unable to give an adequate history. On the bed-table beside her was the so-called nerve "tonic," in reality a sedative containing a bromide mixture. She had taken several such bottles during the course of her illness and, perhaps, for some time previously. She was immediately sent to the hospital with a diagnosis of bromide poisoning. Careful tests on the blood and spinal fluid confirmed this diagnosis.

It took almost two months of intensive medical treatment to restore this woman to health. No amount of manipulation of the spine had been

able to work any wonders in the face of intensive and harmful administration of bromides.

Our second case, Mrs. C. M., was 42 years old when she first went to an osteopath complaining that she was exceptionally tired. So tired, indeed, that it interfered with her eating. A few manipulations of her spine, and presto! — she was feeling better. During that spring and early summer, she felt reasonably well, though not quite like her usual self. Later in the summer, she noted some “pulling pain” in her right chest, and her osteopathic physician, being enlightened and progressive, gave her some diathermy treatments, some more manipulations, and some injections of liver. Unfortunately, this time the magic of the osteopathy was gone, and the patient did not improve. She began to cough, felt worse, and actually spat blood. An X-ray showed her to have advanced tuberculosis.

Mrs. C. M. was admitted to a tuberculosis sanatorium, in which she remained for eighteen months. Conservative sanatorium treatment was of no avail; the disease was too far advanced. Her right lung had to be removed completely. Mrs. C. M. is now reasonably well again, her tuberculosis is better, and who can say whether such a drastic operation might have been avoided had the

proper diagnosis been established earlier and the proper therapy prescribed?

It should not be inferred from these cases that the regular physician is always correct in his diagnosis and always prescribes the proper form of treatment. In the regular practice of medicine, as in osteopathy, errors creep in. But the holier-than-thou position taken by osteopaths is entirely unwarranted. Certainly they see patients once in a while who can be treated as successfully by massage and osteopathic techniques as they can by the more commonly administered methods of healing. But I repeat, more often than not, it is the physician who saves the day for the osteopath.

II

In his description of what osteopathy is, Dr. Thorburn presents a very disarming picture. There is only one question that might be raised — Is the Doctor really talking about osteopathy? Certainly, he is not discussing osteopathy according to the principles and platform laid down by Still, its founder. Let us, then, compare Dr. Thorburn's conception with Still's. Here is Still's platform in his own words.

OUR PLATFORM

First. We believe in sanitation and hygiene.

Second. We are opposed to the use of drugs as remedial agencies.

Third. We are opposed to vaccination.

Fourth. We are opposed to the use of serums in the treatment of disease. Nature furnishes its own serum if we know how to deliver them.

Fifth. We realize that many cases require surgical treatment and therefore advocate it as a last resort. We believe many surgical operations are unnecessarily performed and that many operations can be avoided by osteopathic treatment.

Sixth. The osteopath does not depend on electricity, X-radiance, hydrotherapy, or other adjuncts, but relies on osteopathic measures in the treatment of disease.

Seventh. We have a friendly feeling for other non-drug, natural methods of healing, but we do not incorporate any other methods into our system. We are all opposed to drugs; in that respect, at least, all natural, unharmed methods occupy the same ground. The fundamental principles of osteopathy are different from those of any other system and the cause of disease is considered from one standpoint, *viz.*, disease is the result of anatomical abnormalities followed by physiological discord. To cure disease the abnormal parts must be adjusted to the normal; therefore other methods that are entirely different in principle have no place in the osteopathic system.

Eighth. Osteopathy is an independent system and can be applied to all

conditions of disease, including purely surgical cases, and in these cases surgery is but a branch of osteopathy.

Ninth. We believe that our therapeutic house is just large enough for osteopathy and that when other methods are brought in just that much of osteopathy must move out.

Dr. Thorburn's osteopathy, it can be readily seen, is a strange derivative of Still's, and would hardly be recognized by its father as a natural child. If the osteopathic physician uses serums, bacteriostatic agents and antibiotics, is he really practicing osteopathy? Osteopathy at the present time is on the horns of a dilemma. If it accepts the benefits of modern medicines and admits to the rationale of their use, it must of necessity denounce the basic principles for which osteopathy stands. On the other hand, if osteopathy whole-heartedly embraces the fundamental concepts of osteopathy, it must reject all the benefits of modern medicine. The osteopath finds it difficult to grapple with both horns and tries to ride in a saddle placed between them. This position is very uncomfortable and shaky.

III

Let us look at the founder, Andrew Taylor Still, and see what manner of man he truly was. Whether "Dr." Still was entitled to his doctorate is

not clear, even granting the standards of his day. A review of his autobiography (published in 1897 and revised in 1907) would indicate that he acquired the degree by inheritance from his father. His enthusiasm for his subject exceeded any quest on his part for impartial, scientific evidence. Whenever scientific facts failed to support his theories, Still evolved new theories at a terrific rate. A few examples will suffice. We shall not belabor the point.

He attributed to partial dislocations of the hip such a variety of disorders as hysteria, "confused menstruation," constipation and kidney disease. To dislocations of the spine he attributed constipation, rickets, piles, obesity, diabetes, shaking palsy, eczema, and even dandruff and pimples. Osteopathic physicians today would shudder at the advice Still gave to his diabetic patients. "Give your patients plenty of good food. If he wants sugar or breakfast bacon give it to him. The bacon oils the digestive tract. And I have for many years reasoned that the patient should be fed on sweet substances, honey in particular. . . . So give your patient honey in abundance."

Please note that Still "reasoned" as to the diet of the diabetic patient. As a matter of fact, in all of Still's writing one finds this "reasoning" appearing again and again. For Still,

his reasoning took the place of observation, accumulation of impartial, scientific data, and logical deduction. If Still reasoned that a thing was so, it was of necessity so. No facts to the contrary could shake him in his convictions.

Twenty-eight years after the tubercle bacilli had been isolated, and 60 years after the birth of Louis Pasteur, Still continued to deny the existence of tubercle bacilli or other germs. For Still, the lungs generated gas "by combustion of waste material that came to it," and tuberculosis was due to lack of normal combustion. It is probable that Still never looked down a microscope. "I pay no attention to laboratory stories of microorganisms. We have but little time to spare in analyzing urine, blood lymph, or any other fluid substance of the body because we think life is too precious to dilly-dally in laboratory work when the structures are out of order or before we have made all adjustments from the abnormal." Does the modern osteopath share Still's contempt for the laboratory or does his face blush with embarrassment when he reads such a frightful confession of ignorance? To save face, the modern osteopath must denounce Still, but in doing so, he must denounce osteopathy.

Perhaps one more point is in order. There can be no question that Still

was hounded and abused in the fashion described by Dr. Thorburn. Man's inhumanity to man is tragic in whatever age it occurs and under whatever circumstances. Yet, it must not be assumed that, because saints and prophets are often persecuted, everyone who is treated in this fashion is a martyr to a worthy cause. Idiots too are tormented, fools are laughed at, and swindlers are tarred and feathered.

IV

If we turn from an analysis of Still, the man, to osteopathy, the so-called science, we find that it is a weak and tenuous thread on which to base a theory of disease. Regular medicine has had no fixed theories to hamper its strides. Osteopathy has had the millstone of Still around its neck. The advances made by regular medicine since the turn of the century far exceed anything that can be claimed by any pseudo-scientific doctrine. In 1850, conditions were such that the expectancy of life at birth in the United States was only about 40 years, but in 1947, this figure had risen to 66.8 years. In other words, within four generations the expectancy of life has risen by 27 years, or by two thirds. Although this increase in longevity is due to many factors, organized medicine can look with pride to its own contribution.

Can osteopathy treat pneumonia or septicemia or meningitis with the degree of success that the regular physician can obtain by using simple injections of penicillin? If a spine "lesion" is indeed the cause of such diseases, how then can a cure be effected without manipulation? What manipulative treatment has the osteopathic physician to offer his diabetic patient that is comparable to insulin? Where is the osteopathic subluxation in victims of pernicious anemia who can be treated effectively with a few liver injections, or with the tiniest pinch of folic acid, or vitamin B₁₂? What structural analysis of the spine can the osteopathic physician make in diagnosing early pulmonary tuberculosis that is comparable in its scope to the X-ray? Does the osteopathic physician know that the present death rate for pulmonary tuberculosis is 25.1 per 100,000, as compared to 200 per 100,000 at the turn of the century? Does he know that none of the credit for this remarkable decline can be given to him?

The teaching that "the human body is a complete machine" is more valid in the medical and scriptural sense than it is in the sense used by osteopathy. The human body is a remarkable organism, capable of adjusting itself to terrific abuse and serious disease. It may be overcome by forces from within and from with-

out. Let us consider something simple like trauma. A structurally perfect man can be in an auto accident and have his leg so severely crushed that the only hope of saving his life lies in amputation. The extremes of trauma run from sudden death to such a minor injury as a small cut which is self-healing. Disease, too, may affect the most vigorous man and kill him. During the first World War, the epidemic of influenza often laid low the structurally perfect man and spared the hunchback. How can osteopathy explain such a paradox?

In view of the established and readily demonstrable findings of modern medicine, the osteopath's concept of lesions and subluxations can be dismissed as meaningless double-talk. The term "lesion" is non-specific, and in medical parlance refers to a variety of disorders that would include inflammations, tumors and congenital anomalies. Subluxation does refer to a partial dislocation, and it may be relieved by various forms of manipulation.

Even these forms of manipulation, it must be pointed out, are not the monopoly of the osteopath. Every good physician knows the value of massage. Every orthopedic surgeon knows how to relieve muscle strains. If the layman has the erroneous concept that "osteopathic physicians are rough" it is not because of any

propaganda put out against them by organized medicine. The origin of this concept must be laid squarely at their own door.

Here is how Still would treat a patient who is emaciated, bed-ridden, and suffering the hellish anguish that accompanies the bloody diarrhea of cholera. He says:

If my patient was in bed I had him get out and kneel down at the side of it with his chest resting on the edge of the bed. Then I came up behind him, spread out my knees and took his hips between them. Then with my thumbs one on each side of the spinous processes of the lumbar vertebra I made hard pressure while with my knees I gave his body an oscillating motion, my aim being to give his hips a twist with my knees while I moved my thumbs from joint to joint as I twisted.

It is quite likely, from this description, that if the cholera did not mercifully kill the patient, Still did. Osteopathy could never become any rougher than it has been. There is a limit even to what credulous people will endure.

V

"How does osteopathic medicine differ from allopathic medicine?" Osteopathy, according to Dr. Thorburn's concept, depends more upon physical medicine than upon drugs. Unfortunately for this view, drugs are often

simply indispensable. To suggest an analogy: There is no question that one can rearrange the furniture in a house by setting off an explosion that shakes the walls. This is comparable to what the osteopath does when he attempts to shake the whole body into place. But there are easier ways to rearrange one's furniture. The regular physician, with his drugs and vaccines, can adjust the internal parts with a precision that the osteopath can never obtain with his cruder methods. As for the psychosomatic angle, there is no question that a little massage may be as good for the soul as it is for the body. The back-rub given by the nurse in the hospital may relieve the patient's anxiety and help him sleep as effectively as the sedative capsule prescribed by the physician. But if we mean massage, let us call it massage. Let us not build a whole new system of medicine on a misconception.

Dr. Thorburn's contention that heart disease "is usually responsive to osteopathy" can only force one to point out that he deals with vague generalities. There are all kinds of heart disease. The patient with angular pain may be helped temporarily by the soothing effects of a massage, but the effectiveness of this treatment is short-lived. In the heart that is failing, the osteopath does not even rate second place to digitalis, injec-

tions of mercurials, or administration of oxygen. The osteopath must add these to his armamentarium or he will find his hands locked firmly behind his back. If one wants to claim that electric shock therapy is a form of osteopathy, then one might take considerable credit for the osteopathic cure of mental disease. Electric shock therapy, however, was not devised by osteopaths, and is not employed by them with the same familiarity or frequency that it is by the modern neuro-psychiatrist.

As for surgery or obstetrics, one does not question the osteopath's ability to wield the knife or deliver the baby, *if he has had adequate experience and training* in the operative, pre-operative, and post-operative, care of the patient. Everyone admits that it should be the function of the good surgeon or obstetrician to pay attention to the patient's total needs, including her anxieties. One wonders who the authority is for the statement, "An osteopath is the physician best qualified to treat the lame or painful back." I have already cited several cases which tend to refute such claims. Let me cite another.

Mrs. E. S. was 60 years old when she first consulted an osteopathic physician for pain in the back of her head and neck. (This, according to Dr. Thorburn, is the type of case that the osteopath is "best qualified"

to treat.) She was studied in an osteopathic hospital, where X-rays were taken, and the patient was informed in a matter-of-fact way that she had a partial dislocation of the bones in her skull. This patient, who was obviously a highly emotional person and had been reassured by several eminent neuro-surgeons, now began to worry in earnest. She lay awake nights feeling her head, trying to move the bones back and forth. She could not rest, she could not sleep, she could not eat from fear. The patient was thrown into an acute anxiety state, so severe that she required electric shock therapy for relief. X-rays taken at regular hospitals before and after her treatments failed to reveal any partial dislocation of her skull bones. It might be added that usually the "lesions" that are easiest to treat are those that are non-existent.

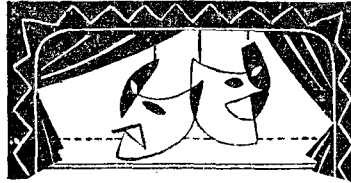
The current status of the osteopath in the eyes of the law is somewhat confused. In Massachusetts, the medical practice act by definition includes osteopaths in the practice of medicine and does not differentiate the type of license issued to them. Virginia osteopaths may obtain a right to use drugs and perform surgery with the use of instruments if they satisfy the board of medical examiners that they are qualified to do so. In Kansas, however, a recent court decision gave full recognition to the right of the

state to confine osteopaths to manipulative therapy and to deny them the right to "use or administer medicinal therapeutics or operative surgery with instruments." The court pointed out that prior to and since the enactment of the Osteopathic Act in 1913, "the science of osteopathy has been and is now based upon the concept that the curative powers for bodily disease, infirmity or disability, are within the body itself, and if the structural integrity of the body is maintained, the natural cures will combat the disability; that the art and science of osteopathy lie in detecting and correcting structural derangements in the body by manipulative therapy." In Kansas, the court said, "the osteopathic profession is classified and regulated as a drugless and knifeless healing art or science."

It must be admitted that osteopaths are doing whatever they can to further their education in the regular arts of healing. For them it has been a slow and difficult process because they have been so encumbered by Still's dicta. Perhaps a new prophet will arise in their school and make the cleavage with the old complete. Until then, one can only agree with the remark made by Dr. Morris Fishbein a few years ago. "Osteopathy," he said, "is essentially an attempt to enter the practice of medicine by the back door."

THE THEATRE

by GEORGE JEAN NATHAN



THE CURSE OF THE LITERAL

WROTE the late Willa Cather: "Whatever is felt upon the page without being specifically named there — that, one might say, is created. It is the inexplicable presence of the thing not named, of the overtone divined by the ear but not heard by it, the verbal mood, the emotional aura of the fact or the thing or the deed, that gives high quality to the novel or the drama, as well as to poetry itself."

There, contrarily, lies the reason for the critical poverty of the bulk of our present American dramatic writing. Not only slaves to Pinero's old dictum that a playwright has to repeat an idea at least three times lest an audience not assimilate it, but also that its intelligence quotient is so modest that the repetitions have to be couched in an emphatic literality, most of our writers for the stage give the impression that their plays are

written on blackboards, and at best with tinted chalks. Our drama, with small if notable exception, thus offers poetry, when it seeks to offer it, that has all the innate literalness of a radio singing commercial, writing projected as fanciful that resembles machine-made lace, and drama that avoids implication in favor of assertion and suggestion in favor of a blow in the eye.

And with what consequence? With the consequence that most of the plays we see are as stifling to any possible imagination and as discouraging to any excursion into a moonlit cloudland as so many extended business telegrams.

Don't mistake my tone. I am not kneeling in *The Pirates of Penzance* and with a show of pious solemnity intoning:

Hail, Poetry, thou heaven-born maid!
Thou gildest e'en the pirate's trade.
Hail, flowing fount of sentiment!
All hail, divine emollient!

I am, in other words, not smugly indulging in the established, routine wail over the absence of poetry in our drama. At least not mainly. What I am speaking of is rather that drama's over-all intentional, or more often helpless and unintentional, verbatim aspect, its fear of the allusive, and its net effect of having been written in a room illuminated by traffic lights. And what is urged is dramatic writing that does not, to its own preordained failure, condescend to audiences in the paradoxical belief that they are necessarily as lacking in imagination as are the playwrights themselves.

II

It has been said of Eugene O'Neill by his detractors that he is not a poet. He may or he may not be. But, whatever he is, he inspires and engenders poetry in his auditors. The younger Tennessee Williams, on the other hand, is proclaimed a poet by his enthusiasts. Yet all that he evokes in his auditors is the sense of a poetry that might have been in his plays but is not there. That is to say, not auditors who venerate as poetic allusions to water-lilies floating on Chinese lagoons and suchlike school-girl horticultural metaphor but in any who appreciate with Carl Sandburg, in his forthcoming remarkably acute study of the subject, that "poetry is where you do better than the

girl who never danced except with her legs" and that "it is a spot about halfway between where you listen and where you wonder what it was you heard."

The great majority of our aspiring American playwrights should go to school to Sandburg and take to heart his counsel. Those like Maxwell Anderson with ambitions as authentic minnesingers deceive themselves into a belief that poetry is something less autobiographical than typographical: something that issues naturally not out of one's psyche and the keyboard of one's own spiritual essence but out of one's external literary exercises, set in indented line. Others pose as poets by fancily and irrelevantly knitting colored cotton threads into burlap themes. And still others, honest though they may be, misconceive as poetry what is discerned to be merely tricks of literary expression.

The true poetic dramatist always gives one the feeling that he has written his play with infinite care out of the inspiration of his mind and has then thrown it away and rewritten it out of the inspiration of his heart. The plays of those of our playwrights who aim at poetry ever impress us as having been written by men to whom poetic expression has been an after-thought. They seem to bake their sponge-cake and hope to conceal its spongy nature by laying over it a

sweet — and often sickening — icing. They are literalists ashamed of what merit there may be in directness and who hope to elevate their position in critical regard by giving it a bogus in-direction which they imagine will be swallowed as a high flight of the imagination.

In the case of a real dramatic poet like, say, O'Casey, one comes away from the theatre with the feeling that one has seen two plays strangely flowing into each other and composing a musical unit: one the literal play, the other the play that defies literality and confounds the first. In the case of the mock dramatic poet one leaves the theatre with the sense that one has seen two distinctly different plays battling with each other: one the pseudo-poetic play, the second the play that espouses literality and, like a contraceptive, confounds the other.

III

At the fourth annual Children's Theatre Conference held not long ago at Hunter College under the auspices of the American National Theatre and Academy, Mrs. Charlotte B. Chorpénning, who I am told is regarded as the dean of playwrights in her juvenile field, offered these rules as mandatory:

(1) There must be a character for the children to identify themselves with. He or she becomes that other self.

(2) The story of what happens to that "other self" with whom they are identified must never stop — not for comedy, unless it actually moves the story, not for dancers, no matter how beautiful, nor moralizing or philosophy, nor for sheer characterization.

(3) Make sure that this experience that happens to the child's "other self" be an experience worth having, which will grow into his life and make him a better individual for the happening.

(4) Be sure that these fundamental experiences are given in the children's own terms. This does not mean it is necessary to use only kindergarten words. A child will understand words too big for him as they apply to the situations he sees. It does mean to give him experiences within the reaches of a child's imagination.

(5) Wherever it can be done without interruption to the story, write in scenes that will give the audience an excuse for exercise — such as loud laughter or applause or stamping. This is to break up too severe a tension.

Far from applying, as the lady obviously believes, to children alone, the rules are almost exactly those which seem to be followed by most of our playwrights in their plays for adults. This is no facetious statement; even a cursory study of their plays will show it to be fact. As in the plays for

youngsters, their literality imposes upon them the necessity for a character with whom their audience may identify itself, for a plot that moves unhindered, for what is called "uplift," for experiences within the reaches of the audience's imagination, for phraseology that it can readily comprehend, and for laughter, where desirable, to break up too severe tension. We find ourselves, accordingly, most often in what is essentially a children's theatre masquerading as an adult one by offering its wares at night, occasionally interlarding its kindergarten exhibits with back-fence chalk scribbles, now and then incorporating into them a little political or sociological misthinking, and permitting smoking in the lobby.

We have, in short, when night falls, helplessly become dramatic babysitters.

IV

The nursery walls of our drama, we observe, are sometimes decorated with vague semblances of Greek letters, which mysteriously affect and impress the children amongst us. The letters, or equally indecipherable hieroglyphics, are the work of certain literary figures, chiefly poets, who have heard the siren call of the theatre and have dived in to try their unaccustomed hands at playwriting. Eschewing the literal as they would the

hemlock, they lean so far backwards that no one, doubtless including themselves, can make head or tail of what they seem to be up to. In such junctures they have a uniform and ever ready reply to those who complain of their obscurity. The meaning of their plays, they explain, was not intended to be easily understood, "since life is obscure too and any poetical interpretation of it is scarcely understandable in the ordinary sense." To which, with all the politeness demanded in the situation, I have the honor to answer: poppycock.

The alleged obscurity of life as a condonation of incompetent and impenetrable dramaturgy has been going on now even longer than the "meaninglessness of life" has been going on as an apology for incompetent and impenetrable novels. Both are ever fallen back on by our neo-Ibsens and neo-Conrads who, unable to clarify their themes as superior dramatists and novelists have done, humbly rely upon obscurity to elucidate obscurity. Their plays and novels are dark rooms in which they hopelessly grope their assertively unwhistling ways, and in which they constantly fall down and bruise their doubtful competences.

Life, true enough, may not be an open book, but to say that it is excessively obscure and without any perceptible meaning is the argument,

I daresay, chiefly of those who take the simplest way out to hide their inability to match their wits against the problem. Shakespeare, confronted by it, though perhaps abstruse in minor detail, had no difficulty in being over-all lucid and intelligible. Nor have other of the greats, debatable though some of their findings may possibly be. Even in their zigzag searchings, their pattern has remained clear. They may now and again have apologized for the weaknesses of their philosophies, but they have never, like the contemporary amateurs, apologized for the weaknesses of the media through which they have sought to express them, nor for an obscurity that was in their work rather than in themselves.

This is no place to enter into a philosophic consideration of life it-

self, since what we are treating of is primarily the dramatic efforts dealing with life and its alleged inscrutable mysteries. But one may venture that those playwrights who drape their intellectual and dramaturgical shortcomings in the protective mantle of that so-called inscrutability are much like such as might argue that love and cancer, being similarly mysterious and puzzling, are best and with sufficient satisfaction to be dismissed as too perplexing for research, analysis, definition, and diagnosis.

It is thus that the cult of the obscure takes its place with the cult of the literal. Both are offspring of the unimaginative and the literary and dramatic impotent. Both, sometimes achieving eminence in a thoughtless theatre, stand proudly on pedestals of putty.

PHRASE ORIGINS—57

CAD: Members of the honorable golfclub-carrying fraternity will doubtless be pained to learn that this term of lofty disparagement is nothing but a degenerate form of caddie. The latter is a Scottish variation of the French cadet, a word originally used in English to refer to the youngest son of a noble family and then, by extension (since the youngest son usually entered the army), to military students. Caddie's downward course in the linguistic scale was marked by a transition to the meaning of "any young boy," and, then, to that of an errand-boy or messenger. The latter sense persists to this day on the golf links. However, the clipped form, cad, lost caste by its application on the campuses of Oxford and Eton to any ill-bred fellow, rather than simply a menial.

LOUIS JAY HERMAN

OUR CATHOLIC-PROTESTANT MARRIAGE

as told to ALBERTA WILLIAMS

LARRY and Margaret hadn't joined the other young people on the steak fry. Instead, they'd gone off as a twosome and spent the evening in endless and fruitless circle-talk. Like any deeply in love and seriously religious Catholic-Protestant young couple, they were struggling to get past the barriers to marriage. They had separated early and it was only just past ten when Larry came to our home. He wanted Paul and me to tell him that our Catholic-Protestant marriage had been idyllic, that love easily took all hurdles erected by meaningful and divergent religious convictions. Desperately he wanted to be told that he and Margaret should go right ahead and get married in her Church — the Roman Catholic — despite remonstrances of both sets of relatives, and that it's a simple matter to settle harmoniously all the tangled situations that develop in a family of mixed faiths.

Paul and I have known Larry for ten years. He's been often in our home

and we're very fond of him. It's understandable that he came to us for a green light. Ostensibly ours is a marriage into which mixed religions have brought no unhappiness. Paul is the manager of a factory in an Illinois town of 10,000. We have three fine, sturdy sons — Bob, 17, Jerry, 13, and Joe, 8 — who love both of us. Ours is a nice, comfortable middle-class home. We drive a good car and have plenty of family fun. I belong to the local woman's club, the parent-teacher association, have the standard home-and-community interests.

On Sunday mornings, Paul and the three boys go to mass and I go alone to my Church — the Baptist. To the casual observer, even to our friends, that Sunday morning worship is the only point where we cannot have a completely shared family experience. There appears to be just one hour weekly when we are amiably conscious of, and admit in our actions, our religious differences.

"You two are happy, I know,"

ALBERTA WILLIAMS *has contributed fiction and articles to the Saturday Evening Post, the Ladies' Home Journal, and many other national magazines. The woman who told her this story is remaining anonymous, but all the details are completely accurate.*

Larry said. "If you had it all to do over again you'd still make the same marriage, wouldn't you?" His eyes implored an affirmative reply.

When we faced the duty of talking honestly with Larry, for the first time Paul and I admitted that we couldn't give his question an affirmative answer. Assuredly we aren't unhappy. We love each other tremendously — we've had to or our marriage couldn't have lasted — and we've had much happiness together. But the religious difference, creating, as it has, an adamantly blocked-off territory where an invisible no-trespassing sign shuts out all discussion and compromise, has been an ever-present and insoluble problem; and we both told Larry that, unless he or Margaret could freely forsake their own denominations and go into the Church of the other, they should not attempt marriage.

"I can't ask Margaret to become a Protestant; she knows Protestantism only as seen by her Church and that makes it an impossible and almost bad thing to her," Larry told us.

"Can you wholeheartedly become a Catholic?" I asked him.

"I cannot possibly accept Catholicism," he admitted. "But surely we can work out everything as we go along."

That was the very phrase Paul and I had used as a sedative in our courtship days — "We'll work out every-

thing." It had seemed the perfect answer to the objections raised by his parents and mine, to consideration of the various eventualities we were told we might have to face in a mixed marriage, to the plain truth that neither of us could accept the other's religion. But when, for Larry's benefit, we reviewed the nineteen years of our marriage we both acknowledged that on no occasion had we worked out anything whatever. Our one attempt to handle religious differences with concessions on both sides had resulted in a miserable failure that nearly wrecked our marriage. No, we worked out things by my yielding my Protestant convictions at every turn, by my being held inexorably to my signed pledge that I would never interfere with Paul's practice of his religion and that any children born to our marriage would be brought up as Catholics.

I was born and lived the first sixteen years of my life in a little Missouri village of about 500 population, where there is no Catholic Church and where I never knew personally anybody who was a Catholic. In such a community, one isn't anti-Catholic; one merely grows up hearing and knowing almost nothing about the Catholic religion.

In our home, we had grace at table, daily family devotions, and always I attended and loved our Baptist Sun-

day School and Church. To my brothers and sisters and me our faith was nothing formidable; God was kind, loving, and understanding, and we took our troubles directly to Him and thanked Him directly for our good fortunes. Thus, our religion was a warm, personal part of our everyday lives. We heard no word of prejudice against any other denomination and felt no sense of division between ourselves and friends who were members of other Protestant sects.

When I was sixteen, we moved to a town of about 1500, where there was a Catholic Church and a parochial school and where, for the first time, I had friends who were Catholics. In this town the Catholic and Protestant youngsters mingled socially in high school, because the town had no Catholic high school, but there was that rather mystifying business of Catholic children all having to go to parochial school through the eighth grade, so that they didn't have full association with Protestant children until they were of high-school age.

Paul was one of a group of young people with whom I became friends. By the time I was eighteen, we were much in love. Only then did we begin to talk about the differences in our religions. As he explained the peculiar requirements and specific details of Catholicism to me, I knew I could never make that faith mine, and Paul

never asked me to do this, although his mother and father kept insisting to him that it was what I should do. My parents never suggested that Paul could become a Baptist and they at least *said* they were willing for me to become a Catholic if I conscientiously could. They tried to get me to visualize the long years of marriage and the many hypothetical and almost certain-to-arise situations in which the variance in religions would result in unhappiness.

"I'll go to my Church and Paul will go to his Church," I told them. To me it seemed as smooth as all that, for by then Paul and I had come to rely greatly on the phrase, "We'll work things out." However, at my parents' urging, I did consent to a nine-month engagement and a three-month stay away from home. This course didn't change my feelings at all, and Paul and I went ahead with our plans and our circle-talking, in which we always told each other we'd somehow "work out everything."

II

Before our marriage, the local priest gave me the usual instructions in the Catholic religion required of any Protestant contracting marriage with a Catholic. Thus I acquired some understanding of Paul's religion. But, of course, Paul took no instructions from my pastor, gained no insight

into my faith. A loyal Catholic knows Protestantism only through the version his own Church gives of it; Paul and his family and his priest would have been shocked had I suggested that my future husband should have even an informal religious discussion with my minister. When a Catholic and a Protestant marry, the understanding religious tolerance is assumed to be the duty and obligation of only the Protestant.

Our wedding ceremony could not take place in the Church, but was performed in the rectory. Just before it, I signed the long statement that included my promise never to interfere with Paul's practice of his religion and to rear as Catholics any children we might have. To me that signature was a deeply serious undertaking; I felt I was making a solemn promise in God's sight and with Him as my witness, and I had no intention of ever swerving from my pledge nor did I make any mental reservations as to the extent to which I should keep it. However, I doubt that any young person deeply in love and signing such a statement has the capacity to foresee in the least just how difficult it may some day be to keep that sworn word. The pledge will, one agrees, be kept. But, one reflects comfortingly, there will be this fair and vague "working out" of details.

During the first year of our mar-

riage, our Catholic-Protestant division could seem a thing of Sunday mornings only. Paul went to mass with his people and I joined my parents and brothers and sisters to go to our Baptist Church. Paul would drive me to my parents' home or to my Church, go on to his Church, and drive by and pick me up after our services. Just a short separation. But it was a separation — and our only one — right at the time when all our other interests were being joyously and radiantly shared. And it was a separation we never discussed, something we avoided mentioning, as though instinctively we were fearful that words would convert a nebulous doubt into an acknowledged and solidified trouble.

We had been married two years when Bob was born. The baby was only seven days old and I was still enveloped in that first wonderfully tender maternal sense of his possession when Paul and his mother came into my room and Paul said to the nurse, "Get the baby ready now; we're going to take him to be baptized."

I had known right along that my baby would receive Catholic baptism, that it would be a ceremony in which I, the child's mother, could take no part, but it was only when I saw my tiny son taken directly from my arms to be dedicated to a faith I could not share that I understood the signifi-

cance of my pre-marriage pledge. I had renounced all rights to sharing one of the most important sides of my child's life and development. I wept helplessly, but, before Paul returned with the baby, I had admitted to myself that my sorrow was unjustifiable; the whole thing was something I had agreed to willingly, and any discussion of my feelings would be futile and even mistaken.

When Bob was almost four, Jerry was born. The incidents surrounding Jerry's baptism formed nearly an exact replica of the start of his brother's religious life, but this time I knew the pattern and I could be more calm about it all.

As my little boys learned to talk, listen to stories, enjoy rhymes, I couldn't teach them those short, simple prayers with which all Protestant children are given their first impressions of their direct relationship with God. My children's religious training had to be purely Catholic, which meant that I had to leave it all to Paul and to the teaching nuns and the priests with whom the youngsters would later have contact.

When Bob was five, Paul started taking our son to mass with him. I'd get the little boy all cleaned up in his best clothes and send him off with his daddy. Jerry was too young then for me to leave him and go to my Church. When Paul and Bob re-

turned, I'd ask Bob the same sort of questions a mother puts to a youngster who has just come home from a Sunday-School kindergarten. I couldn't say, "Show me what you did this morning," or "Tell me what stories you heard," but I'd ask him what had happened, what he'd seen and learned. He'd always answer me, "Nothing happened, mother. There's nothing to tell." I thought of this recently when an adult Catholic convert told me that the priest's first admonition to her had been against all religious discussion or argument with Protestants.

Paul and his family simply assumed that Bob would have to go to parochial school. I knew this was the usual course for Catholic children, and I had no objections to it. However, I did not want my children to have exclusively Catholic educations, so that all their playmates and friends would be Catholics and they would have almost no associations with children of other faiths. I think school should be preparation for life in this world and I didn't wish my sons to get the idea that they could safely mingle and deal with only those of their own religion. I told Paul my feelings and he listened sympathetically and concurred with them. We came to a perfectly pleasant agreement that Bob should attend parochial school up to the fourth grade but should take the

last half of his grade-school work in public school, so that in childhood he would have both types of educational environment.

When Bob finished the fourth grade, Jerry was ready to start to school, and that fall we decided to enroll both lads in public school, thinking that under this plan they could attend the same school and that Jerry could have his parochial school years in the last half of the grades. The evening of the first day we enrolled our sons in public school, the telephone rang and Paul went into the hall and answered it. For the next twenty minutes, as I went about my housework, I could hear snatches of Paul's conversation punctuated frequently with "Father," so that I knew he was talking with the priest. When Paul finally returned to the room where I was he looked wretched, as though he were physically ill. "Irene," he told me, "If we keep the boys in public school I'm to be denied all the sacraments of my Church."

"But why?" I demanded. "Public schools are for everybody — Catholics, Protestants, Jews, everybody. That's the reason I want my children to have a background that includes going to public schools."

Paul just shook his head. "I can't explain it. Whether or not we like it, that's the way things are. If we send the boys to public school it means

you've broken your pledge to bring them up as Catholics, and I've given up my religion."

We had a frighteningly emotional scene. I said the things I'd been storing up for twelve years. I declared that this was a country of religious freedom and tolerance, but that I could see none of these ideals in my own family. I protested that I was not attempting to bring up our children outside the Catholic Church, but that my pledge was now being given so rigid an interpretation that I was ready to break it. But everything Paul and I could say to each other beat helplessly against the rules his Church set for the rearing of youngsters and against the cold fact that, by digressing from those rules he could be denied all sacraments — a sentence that would be unthinkable to him and his family.

Finally, I said bitterly, "This proves that neither of us can keep a promise. I'm failing on my solemnly signed pledge; you're breaking your promise to allow Bob to go to public school; we're both disregarding the promises we made to each other to 'work things out,' because we work them out only by my capitulation. Since we can't either one keep a promise, it's time for us to give up this marriage and separate."

Of course we didn't separate. Two people who love each other, have two

fine children and another one scheduled — for I was then pregnant with Joe — cannot just break up their marriage over troubles that arise from religious differences. What we did was to spend a most unhappy evening in circle-talking, but this time we didn't fool ourselves by saying we'd "work things out." We knew that Paul's Church had to be allowed to do *that*, and, for our marriage to endure, in all religious matters I had to step completely out of the picture. Paul was clearly aware that this was unjust to me, he even understood the terrific and permanent hurt it was inflicting, and his unhappiness about it all was as great as mine; but a lifetime of unquestioning adherence to the teachings of his Church had so ingrained in him acceptance of its policies as final that he would always have to follow them.

The next morning we enrolled Bob and Jerry in the parochial school. When Joe, our youngest son, was eighteen months old, we moved to our present southern Illinois location. And when Joe reached school age, we engaged in no vain discussion whatever but just enrolled him at the local parochial school. Our town has no Catholic high school and, therefore, our sons will all get four years of public school. I am very thankful for this. At least they cannot go out into this world until they've had daily associa-

tion with Protestant and Jewish youngsters and boys and girls of no religious background at all. Bob finished public high school last June, Jerry starts this fall, and Joe will go when he's old enough.

III

Now, in all my children's religious life I take no part at all. I can be merely a bystander. I've gone to mass with them occasionally, but I'm just an onlooker with no spiritual union or relationship to them during the ritual and when they go to the altar rail for communion, I cannot accompany them. Through the years, I have spent many evenings helping my lads with their homework from school — arithmetic, geography, reading, all the secular subjects. But when it's time to study catechism, a heavily emphasized part of their school work, they must do their lessons alone. I cannot teach them what I do not believe. What I'd like to do is enter into their religious study dispassionately and explain to them where their faith is parallel to and where it differs from Protestantism, so that as Catholics they could still understand my religion.

At our meals, the boys recite the Catholic grace they are taught by the nuns at parochial school. When our youngsters were very small, I'd get them ready for bed and kiss them

goodnight. Then Paul would go into the boys' bedroom and he and our sons would have their Catholic prayers together. The sense of exclusion this evening custom has brought me has been sentimentally hard for me to bear. My mother always prayed with us at bedtime, and I'm still not reconciled to being unable to terminate my children's day this way.

Often Paul and the boys go to early mass and are all back home by the time I am ready to leave for Church services. Joe is still too young to understand the various things he is learning in his religious training, and when he sees me put on my hat and gloves he often asks, "Mother, can I go with you?" With all my heart I should love to grant this request, but it is forbidden by the printed list of specific sins used by my eight-year-old as a helpful reminder for confession. Under the heading, "Have I Sinned . . ." is the completion — "By going to another Church." I cannot deliberately consent to my child's doing something he is being taught to regard as sinful and that he will later have to confess and for which he will have to do penance. No matter how great one's religious tolerance or what signed promises one has made before marriage, almost any mother is sure to feel a sense of outrage when she realizes that her child, with her acquies-

cense and apparent approbation, is being taught that it is sinful for him to attend the Church of her faith.

Incessantly, little examples of our religious division confront me and my children. Not long ago, Joe was being indoctrinated as to the tremendous importance of burial in consecrated ground. To a liberal Protestant such an idea gives an appalling and disproportionate importance to the body's physical remains. I got an unpleasant shock, then, when my distressed little boy came to me and said, "Mother, you and I can't be buried in the same place, can we?"

In my childhood, our family pastor played a rôle as important as our family physician. Today, I see how greatly many of my friends, in bringing up their children, rely upon and appreciate the help and advice of their pastors. But our family really has no pastor. The priest never comes to our home. Indeed, I know him only by sight. My own pastor understands my situation, but, as long as I fulfill my pre-marriage promise in a way satisfactory to the Catholic Church, he cannot help me in any problems that include the spiritual and moral welfare of my children.

Spiritually, I have a constant loneliness, not because my husband and sons are Catholics, but because they cannot be given an unbiased explanation of and understanding for Prot-

estantism. In a family where neither husband nor wife pays more than perfunctory lip service to religion, this lack of understanding would be unimportant. But two people who marry, who are deeply religious in sharply separate ways, are attempting a union that can never be complete and uninhibited. At the outset they are demarcating for no contact a large area of their lives.

Years ago I came across a Catholic pamphlet entitled *Marry Your Own Kind*. It was a little booklet for Catholic young people and it hammered home the idea that they should risk marriage only with fellow Catholics. When I read the arguments they made me angry. I thought it monstrous to insist that denominational differences should preclude marriage. Today I don't feel that way. My sons

are Catholics. As far as I know they are "good Catholics." If they remain loyal to their faith, then I hope they marry Catholic girls.

What I truly wish for all young Catholic-Protestant couples who fall in love is that they could be given an intelligent insight into each other's denominations, marry with mixed religions as no barrier, bring up their children with a full understanding of both faiths, and, when these children are voluntarily ready to do so, allow them to choose their own way of worship. To me, that would be true religious freedom. I do not see even the approach of any such tolerant attitude and practice. Therefore, I hope my sons will take the advice of the propaganda leaflet I once thought blindly narrow. For them I want the joy of full understanding and sharing.

LATE AUTUMN

BY MARY POOLE

A wise
summersoft day . . .
like a ripe gold woman
wondering when her lover's eyes
will stray.

THE CRISIS IN AMERICAN POETRY

BY ROBERT HILLYER

AMERICAN poetry at present is the almost undisputed playground of a loose confederation of critics whom we may term the school of Eliot. Up to four or five years ago, their writings were confined to the more esoteric literary reviews, but through logrolling, discreet acquaintanceship, academic positions, and brow-beating the public with the condescension of élite creatures, they have gradually acquired power even in the book-review sections of the metropolitan press. They are a disputatious lot, always clamoring to be named, and on that score I have no intention of obliging them. I have had previous experience with their trickiness, which is scarcely exceeded by that of the Communists, whose tactics of infiltration into our colleges they have imitated. No, they need not be named, but they can readily be identified by their references and by their style.

Their main reference is, of course, to the works of T. S. Eliot, his verse,

his prose, or both. An admiration for the cantos of Ezra Pound is another hallmark. Their belief that Mr. Allen Tate is a great poet and critic summons his name not seldom to their pages. The music of words is a subject repugnant to them, since they are wholly concerned with irony, the meaning of meaning, paradoxes, ambiguities, ambivalences, dichotomies — and, indeed, any double-talk. Love poetry, except for that of e. e. cummings, is anathema to them, and therefore they will tell you that the sonnets of Donne are better than the sonnets of Shakespeare. In fact, a fanatical overestimation of John Donne as poet has led them to fulfill the prophecy of the great George Saintsbury (who *was* a critic) when he wrote, back in the nineties, “Donne is eminently of that kind which lends itself to sham liking, to coterie worship, to false enthusiasm; and here is another weapon in the hands of the infidels . . .” A decadent poet like Arthur Rimbaud

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serves as a maypole for their prancing, much as the more obvious decadences of Huysmans served the aesthetes of a generation ago. For the most part, they reserve their minute attention for works written since the appearance of T. S. Eliot's *Waste Land* (1922), fresh interpretations of which still engage emerging talents, though Eliot's watery *Four Quartets* are the usual grind. Art-for-art's-sake people, they consider a poem as an independent entity detached from life, time, emotion, and, most emphatically, the common decencies.

They can also be recognized by their style, which is irresistibly suggestive of Tambo and Mr. Bones of the black-face minstrel show. Professor Douglas Bush of Harvard, in his essay on "The New Criticism: Some Old-Fashioned Queries," which appeared in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association* for March 1949, quotes an excellent example: "And thus the great heterogeneity of trends that has often been decried in Spenglerian tonalities as the cultural mongrelism of the decadent megalopolis is here presented again in Spencerian accents of promise (indeed progress)."

Except for St. Paul (see I Corinthians, xiv, 8-20), no one has dealt better with the new school of criticism than Professor Bush. I quote from the article mentioned above:

The new criticism, the offspring of Mr. Richards [Professor I. A. Richards of Harvard] and Mr. Eliot, has carried the marks of a mixed heredity, but it may be said to have reacted against historical, impressionistic, and moralistic approaches to poetry and to have concentrated upon direct and precise analysis of form and texture. . . . For a select though large number of literary students the new criticism has been an advanced course in remedial reading. . . . And one cannot miss the tone of conscious intellectual superiority, a superiority which arouses envious despair in the less highly endowed. There emerges a picture of a little world of several dozen people who embody all the literary intelligence of the country, who form a compact and exclusive communion of saints. Like Augustine Birrell's House of Lords, they represent nobody but themselves, and enjoy the full confidence of their constituents. Mr. A quotes Mr. B, Mr. B quotes Mr. A, Mr. A and B quote Mr. C and are quoted by him, and so on. Within this small band of the elect there is a beautiful harmony of mind, since they all speak the same language and are united by that special illumination from which the hordes of untouchables are cut off.

If the reader desires specific examples of such criticism, he will find many in the files of *Poetry*, the magazine of verse published in Chicago, especially during the past year. There,

too, he will find a "glossary of the new criticism," published through several issues late in 1948 and early in 1949, which will fill him with wonder of one sort or another. Mr. Hayden Carruth, the present editor of *Poetry*, is an outspoken defender of the new æstheticism, and has attacked my method of dealing with the award of the Bollingen prize to the fascist sympathizer, Ezra Pound.

II

Under the dominance of the school of Eliot no discussion of tendencies in modern American poetry is possible. There are no tendencies. There is only a stagnation. Tendencies are motions toward somewhere from a common source. But for twenty years now, we have had little criticism outside the scanning and expounding of texts, usually second-rate. The historical, judicial, biographical, and impressionistic aspects of criticism have disappeared, leaving us merely a dry and dubious pedantry. Under the guidance of such pundits as I. A. Richards and William Empson (who is also a very wooden Indian of a poet), *semantic* criticism has superseded all else: that is, the minute examination of every word in a poem detached from all other considerations. No manuscript of Keats ever received more solemn scrutiny from the Ph.D.s than some portentous trifle

by William Carlos Williams or some faun-flight of budding fancy. Thanks to this loss of perspective, this obscurity and intellectual snobbery, all poetry has suffered an inestimable decline in the eyes of the public. It has lost dignity and regard.

It is the quality of the beech tree to render the soil beneath poisonous for any other growth, and so it is under the sterilizing shadow of false learning. Certain older poets, Robert Frost or Ridgely Torrence, for example, stand away from and above the blight. And, as will be seen, a group of younger poets is beginning to appear in fresh woods and pastures new. But always in the history of American literature there will be this one brown, withered patch, a quarter-century of desert where once the æsthetes sterilized the soil.

Karl Shapiro in one of his more valiant moments summed up the situation: "To break the hypnotic spell of detachment which the new critics have cast over poetry is one of the more serious literary issues of our time." To that task I have long since addressed myself. The power of the school of Eliot may be gauged by the fact that of all the poets who have privately assured me of their support, less than half have spoken out in print. The reason for their silence is apparent. The modern critics can do almost irreparable damage to a poetic

reputation, and in an age that they have made largely indifferent to poetry, their displeasure might well deprive a poet of any chance of gaining a foothold. For my part, I have nothing to lose by them, and if I gained their approbation I should be profoundly disturbed.

It might be unjust to assert that the main purpose of this school has been to mystify the reading public and alienate it altogether from poetry, although that has been their accomplishment. They began by mystifying each other and ended by deceiving themselves. I saw the same psychological process at work some years ago when I was on a committee to investigate a spiritualistic medium. She believed that all the phenomena she was not producing herself took place supernaturally. Her husband, who was also her collaborator, was equally convinced that the part he was not responsible for was quite genuine. Each for the other created a zone of belief, so that although they began by mystifying each other, they ended by deceiving themselves. Some thirty years ago, the late Samuel Crothers published in the *Atlantic Monthly* an essay on "The Gregariousness of Minor Poets," rather shrewdly prophetic of such groupings as we see today. The self-deceptions of the members of the fraternity may lead them to overestimate their power

and produce some ill-adventured defiance of the public good such as the recent Bollingen award to Ezra Pound. That *tour de force* was far too arrogant and may well mark a turning point in the standing of Mr. Eliot, who, although legally not an American citizen, served on the committee.

III

The standing of Mr. Eliot is of primary importance to his school, for they have no other common reference. Aside from his writings, the cantos of Ezra Pound, and some rather stilted, adjectival pieces by Mr. Tate, the body of verse associated with the modern aesthetes is small. The young poets of the cult seem to be writing verses with but one end in view: to provide more specimens for semantic analysis. Some of the new critics were once poets in their own right before this strange Delphic fumigation overcame them. They gradually lost themselves in the web of their own spinning, which is intricate, attractive to aimless wings, and, in the end, lethal.

The annotating of every line and phrase of Mr. Eliot's *opera* is a task divided among aspirants as literature in general used to be divided among candidates for the Ph.D. There is no point of view from which he has not been considered, and the body of commentary will confuse and aston-

ish generations to come. A recent volume so equates his symbolism with that of Dr. Jung that I made the mistake of assuming that Mr. Eliot was a disciple of Jung's, when, in fact, he had never read Jung at all. The mistake was natural, for Mr. Eliot's references and borrowings are so widespread that the absence of a smattering of Jung is more surprising than its presence would be.

Mr. Eliot as philosopher is much nearer to Madame Blavatsky or the *gurus* of high Tibet than he is to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The mists that obscure parts of those windy, wordy *Four Quartets* have blown down — quite a distance — from the Himalayas. The so-often-repeated concept of past, present, future, forever moving and forever at rest, has already worn out every metaphor the Orient has to offer.

Even the more popular aspects of Oriental philosophy are to be found in Mr. Eliot's writings and may account for his own popularity among the trimmer suburbs. It is not probable that the school of Eliot regards the late Kahlil Gibran's *Prophet* with any degree of respect, yet there is much in it that runs parallel to the thought and even the expression of the *Four Quartets*. Gibran's discourse on time, beginning on page 70 of *The Prophet* with the line, "Yet the timeless in you is aware of life's time-

lessness" and continuing to the end; and the passage on page 104 beginning, "The wind blows and restless are the sails" to the end, are highly suggestive of *Four Quartets*, page 25, beginning "Fare forward, you who think that you are voyaging" to the end of that passage; or, on page 27, the passage beginning "But to apprehend . . ." These fragments are so similar in tone and thought that, read aloud, they have deceived some explicators of Eliot. Nor are they exceptional. Gibran, along with Omar and Tagore, has won wide favor through aspects Oriental yet not too esoteric, and in Mr. Eliot's more blurred transcendentalism we find one of the main reasons for his popularity.

The late Llewellyn Powys accounted for that popularity with other explanations. I quote a few sentences taken from Mr. Powys' essay, "T. S. Eliot: The Tutor-Poet," in the *Week-End Review*, an English periodical, for May 20, 1933:

We may well inquire how it has come about that this poet, so adept at identifying himself with the predilections of London society, has enjoyed so universal a recognition. . . . His popularity may be accounted for in two ways. First, from his disposition to champion orthodoxy. . . . Secondly, because of the dramatic interest of his personal predicament. . . . Mr.

Eliot is a poet who, partly through accident, has allowed himself to become entrained by convention and society, and the reading world has been as intent to watch his spiritual struggles as it would be intent to watch an animal in a lethal chamber. . . . Mr. Eliot's complicated symbols of despair are the outcome of his revolt against the suffocating environment from which he has been too weak or too disillusioned to extricate himself.

This passage is typical of much English criticism of Mr. Eliot, which has been more candid than that in America. Just a few weeks ago, in the *New Statesman and Nation*, a reviewer remarked in passing, "As we read the *Cantos* we see why Mr. Eliot saw so much in Mr. Pound, for their voices are very similar." Although Mr. Eliot no longer properly belongs to America, it would seem that America belongs to him, for on this side of the water skepticism concerning his genius has almost come to an end—at least in print. A sonnet of mine that appeared in the *New Yorker*, called "Parnassus—1935," concluded with the line, "And Eliot broods on and on and on." In 1923, writing in the *New York Post Literary Review*, Mr. John Crowe Ransom stated that Mr. T. S. Eliot's *Waste Land* was one of the most "insubordinate" poems in the English language. "But I do not

mean," Mr. Ransom said, "in saying this to indicate that it is permanently a part of the language; I do not entertain that as a possibility. The genius of our language is notoriously given to feats of hospitality; but it seems to me that it will be hard pressed to find accommodations at the same time for two such incompatibles as Mr. Wordsworth and the present Mr. Eliot; and any realist must admit that what happens to be the prior tenure of the mansion in this case is likely to be stubbornly defended." Alas, not stubbornly enough!

Such an honest and discriminating statement in print today would bring the whole school of Eliot buzzing from their hives like angry bees. It would be unwise, it would be suicidal, for them to permit dangerous criticism of Eliot to pass unchallenged. His destiny is their destiny. For better or worse, they are tied up with his artistic fate. For my part, I should like to go on record with the future as averring that in both his prose and his verse, Mr. Eliot is an interesting dead-end and nothing more. But for one of his school to say so would be at the peril of his own prestige and the jeopardy of the entire cult. Eliot is the one trunk sufficiently substantial to support their enormous parasitic growth; if he falls, they fall with him. No one can take his place. Pound is, with all his works, literally

as well as figuratively, *pot pourri*. All attempts to groom Mr. Tate as an important figure are frustrated at the start by the existence of his works. Eliot is and Eliot must remain the stock in trade for this group. There is no one else. When there is no major figure for the new criticism to cling to, it will, of necessity, have to start analyzing itself, and criticism will be digested in criticism until the whole mess dissolves.

It is doomed anyway. The younger poets are emerging from irony, cynicism, and disdain, which have long been the instruments of Eliot-esque despair. Peter Viereck, awarded the Pulitzer prize in 1948, is a poet whose uneven technique and verbal indulgences have annoyed some critics whose taste I otherwise admire, but his proportion of excellent poems is the gauge of his future. Louis Kent's strange and beautiful lyrics have won him the Shelley Award and are to be collected into a book in 1950. Hyam Plutzik's *Aspects of Proteus* is on my high shelf of poetry, and so is Royal Murdoch's *Gargantua's Mouth*. Joseph Joel Keith's work needs winnowing, but the good grain is there. Boris Todrin's poems have been issued in several volumes, which, thanks to the prevailing apathy regarding poetry, have gone almost unnoticed. He is an important poet, and E. A. Robinson was among the

admirers of his work. Charles Edward Eaton is the author of two volumes and continues to develop his talents ever more richly. Francis Maguire's *Journey with Music* is a collection of lyrics that more than live up to their title. In Martha Keller's *Brady's Bend*, her amazing virtuosity of rhythm finds its dramatic themes. Louis Simpson's newly published *The Arriivistes* is unquestionably the work of a first-rate poet.

We listen for these new voices with the same ever-fresh surprise we feel when the long-retarded spring at last returns. The sterile pedantry called new, although it has long since been rusty, had nothing to offer us but irony, spiritual fatigue, obscurity.

We came perilously near to losing poetry because of a few aging critics in fealty to one disillusioned and, when all is said and done, very *minor* poet, who was born old. Now we are ready for joy again, and for love poems, and for music renewed, and faith in our country instead of contempt for it; we are ready for tragedy and the elegiac strain if need be. We have tarried overlong in a darkening library at the end of a winter afternoon, poring over the footnotes of bitterness under the eye of prim disciplinarians. But outside the spring has come. The door is open. There is **nothing** to keep us here.

THE PROBLEM OF PAIN

A STORY

BY J. A. BROWN

EVERYBODY in Arcadia Mansions knew that old Mr. Silver had been sick for years but no one had realized how seriously. They used to watch him grimacing when he pulled himself up the creaking old stairs, pausing for breath at the bend where the piece of stained glass let through a shaft of colored light on to the faded linoleum, before going on up to his room where he did all his own cooking over an electric grill despite the notice "Residents are forbidden to use electricity for cooking." Nor did anyone know that he was a monied man until a trained nurse took a room next to his and announced her intention of staying there to look after him. Heads came out of every door to see the heavy Afrikaner woman going up the stairs in her white uniform.

"If I had known he was so well off I would have kept an eye on him," Mrs. du Preez the caretaker mourned to her husband. "Would have taken him a plate of soup now and then."

"Why don't you start now then?"

her husband answered. "Never too late. The old boy might pop off and leave us a fortune."

"The very ticket," she answered.

Mrs. du Preez found that taking Mr. Silver a bowl of soup was not as easy as it seemed. She went up the stairs with a white bowl carefully held in her hands, her thin mouth rehearsing the phrases of apology and concern with which she would accompany her gift, but stopped outside his room, arrested by a barely-restrained groan. She listened, agog with excitement and curiosity, then boldly knocked and opened the door.

She saw that the nurse bent over Mr. Silver, pushing a bright needle into his wasted arm.

"I just brought you a bowl of soup, Mr. Silver," Mrs. du Preez said loudly and the nurse turned from the bed. "Get out of here!" she ordered. Mrs. du Preez found herself standing at the head of the stairs, the bowl of soup cooling in her hand. Recovery brought indignation. "She can't talk

J. A. BROWN is a newspaperman living in Johannesburg, South Africa, whose short stories have appeared in many American and Canadian magazines. He has just completed his first novel.

to me like that," she told herself.

But nurse Botha did talk to her like that and to everyone else in the building. Some of the residents were offended though no one complained when nurse Botha went firmly up to the top floor where Nick Demetrios, the Greek, lived with a girl, and told him that from now on there was to be no more saxophone playing. Nick is big and truculent, especially with women. He came to the door in his shirt sleeves, still wetting his lips to keep his mouth right for the reed. "Well?" he demanded.

"There's a man dying in the building," nurse Botha said quietly.

"The world's full of men dying," Nick retorted and he put his full mouth to the instrument and blew a long note.

"That's all, please," she replied, not angrily.

Nick pushed the door shut with his bare foot and listened to her firm tread on the staircase to the first floor. "I play when I like," he asserted, but he put the instrument back in its green-lined case and shoved it under the bed.

II

People wondered how nurse Botha would react to Miss Glenwilliam's Sunday evenings with her friends from the Christ the Healer chapel on the corner; loud evenings with the

harmonium wheezing out revival hymns while Miss Glenwilliam and her friends gave praise for their lot. On Sunday evening, all listened to the twitter and eager tread of the chapel friends going upstairs to Miss Glenwilliam's room. From the ground floor to the tiny room in the peak of the tin roof where an art student painted pictures no one understood or liked, every door was ajar.

The happy band were in the third verse of the first hymn when nurse Botha opened Mr. Silver's door and went upstairs, her capable black shoes treading each step firmly, confidently. In Miss Glenwilliam's room the air quivered with the instrument's wheezing and the reedy sopranos of the accompanying women. The cawrie shells on the many-tiered shelves of the ancient instrument quivered with an eagerness they seemed to have borrowed from Miss Glenwilliam's throat as, with full trembling joy, and the *vox humana* stop of the organ pulled to its full extent, she pedaled and pounded.

No one heard the firm knock until the end of the third verse.

"I wonder if you ladies would discontinue your Sunday meetings until Mr. Silver is in better condition?" That was how nurse Botha put it; no smiles, no mincing her words, but direct. The roomful of aging women looked at Miss Glenwilliam to see

what attitude they ought to adopt and saw the aging champion of religion gird on her armour and unsheath the sword of righteousness.

"Our devotions," she said, "have always been conducted in a spirit of giving, not of annoyance. It has always been our privilege and Christian duty to try to bring a little of the light we have experienced in our own lives into the lives of our neighbours." The enlightened women seemed to inflate and their shabby unenlightened clothes to radiate spiritual strength and shining moral conviction. They nodded agreement.

"There's a man in the building in pain, ladies," nurse Botha said.

"Pain!" exclaimed Miss Glenwilliam. "There is no such thing as pain. We, of the Church of Christ the Healer, do not recognize pain. Do we, ladies?"

The good ladies agreed that pain was the consequence of imperfect love.

"We are full of love, nurse," Miss Glenwilliam glowed. "Love casts out suffering. Pain cannot abide where love is. Am I not right, ladies?"

"There is not one of you who knows what pain is," said nurse Botha bluntly, closing the door.

About twenty minutes later the ladies of the church were heard going softly downstairs; those residents with better hearing and better heads for

significant small details heard the creaking pause as they stopped in an irresolute herd outside Mr. Silver's door. Their mission was to convince Mr. Silver of the folly, the wicked unnecessary folly of pain, but when nurse Botha opened the door without warning they dispersed in a twittering medley, foolish and shamefaced as schoolgirls.

Only Miss Glenwilliam stood resolutely. "If we have faith, sister," she said, raising her voice so that the creature in bed could also hear, "there is no pain. God did not intend His creatures to suffer, but sometimes He lets us suffer to teach us that we must restore our faith in Him. Then Mr. Silver, like the cripple by the pool, we may arise and throw away our crutches."

The man on the bed was heard to speak. "She means well," he said, great effort in his voice, but Miss Glenwilliam, unfamiliar to pain, could not know that he had clawed himself to the surface of the sea of pain in which he had been immersed for so long that there was no longer any other sensation in the world. Indeed, the world had narrowed itself until it was not even the four dim white walls of the room. These, only six feet away from his bed, were unreal. The whole universe was contained within his body and he floated endlessly on a gray ocean of pain, a limitless ocean

whose horizons were one with the gray sky so that within the limits of his drifting there was a gray uniformity of pain sometimes punctured by the shriller experience of a nurse's fingers searching over his shrinking flesh for a fresh place to pierce him with a dose of morphia. Aaaa, God! to feel the fingers, gentle though they are, making a hillock of the flesh, flesh whose every atom is a crystal of pain grating on another crystal of pain; to feel their facets grind. Then all is drifting, sliding half-death until one wakes again to feel the familiar waves lap-lapping round and waking he would say: "Do you know, nurse, when I was young, I never guessed that there was so much pain in the whole world."

III

It was not a complaint. It was more a query than anything else; as if he were asking himself a question to which he knew there was no answer. The question was: why should I be expected to suffer so? If there is a God at all, why should he let me suffer such tortures . . . surely it cannot please him to know that I am in such pain that day and night are one and there is no release ever? I am only a man with a man's weakness, but I never saw a living creature suffer unnecessarily, why should I? And his mind would go back to his boyhood

and his first experience of animal pain.

It was only a mongrel dog run over by a Scotch cart on a bend of the road and it lay howling while the cart bowled on in its cloud of red dust. Two colored men laboring on the road ran up and stood watching the animal writhe and as he watched, one of them brought down his spade on its skull. The furry limbs kicked but the dog did not die. A look of disgust and pity crossed the colored's crude face and he spat in the dirt. His companion said: "I never seen such a damned dog to die." Then the merciful spade struck again and this time the limbs quivered, the quivering became a tremor, the tremor became the stillness of earth, the eyes glazed and there was no more pain, for the colored man, the crude colored man who beat his wife and drew his knife in wine, had not suffered the mongrel to linger in pain; his foul man-spittle had dried in his mouth with pity.

Now he envied the god-like strength of the colored man and his willingness to release a damned dog from torment.

Sometimes his mind went back almost seventy years, dwelling with fresh clarity on the first thing he had ever killed. It was a sparrow, hopping on a path, and he had stalked it, stone in hand, every nerve intent on his purpose. The stone flew and struck the soft body. It seemed then to his

childish mind that the sky darkened and for an awful instant the universe halted and all things on heaven and earth paused to see the boy who had taken life. Yes, in that instant of the sparrow's passing, God halted the universe to gaze on the killer who picked up the soft warm body and hoped that the down moved by the wind was stirred by life. In his guilty fear he had thrown the body in the river and watched it borne away amongst the willow roots.

If God cared for the sparrow, had He no mercy for its killer? Apparently not. Two years was too long a time to lie with flesh and bone corrupting . . . if there was any God who cared at all He would not have permitted it. Sometimes he made a little joke about it to the nurse.

His flesh and bone was in such continuous pain that he laid on a water bed and his head, in which the bone was disintegrating, was so full of pain that he could not lay it on a pillow and it was encircled and supported by a round white air cushion. "When am I going to get a harp to go with my halo, nurse?" he used to joke and he would add: "I really am surprised at the Lord, nurse. He should have taken me long ago."

Generally he made his joke before nurse Botha bathed him, for bathing was the most excruciating experience

he knew, worse, far worse, than being pierced by the needle. To bathe him it was necessary to lift him and to be moved at all was so marvelously painful that it passed comprehension. Whenever he saw nurse Botha come in with a basin he would grimace and say: "I don't think I need a bath, nurse."

He was in too much pain to feel the compassion for him that flowed out of her when she replied: "Oh, Mr. Silver, I must, you know."

His emaciated face beneath the absurd white halo of the rubber support would grimace again and he would say: "I tell you what, dear, just make a splashing noise with the water and they'll think you're bathing me." Then he would submit.

As she washed the long white body, barely touching the withering flesh, observing the countless blue punctures from the needle, she would feel wild weeping in her throat and a fierce desire to emancipate him from his agony . . . sometimes hot anger flowed through her at the heedlessness of the God Miss Glenwilliam imagined she worshiped.

A sudden spate of letters began to arrive for Mr. Silver, some in childish handwriting, others in a mature hand. Mrs. du Preez steamed them all open and passed on the news to her husband. "Little nephews and nieces writing," she told him. "Dear Uncle

Ed, please get well because we love you so."

Grizzled old du Preez took his pipe out of his mouth to growl.

"Vultures crowding to the kill. Why don't they say what they mean — Dear Uncle Ed, don't forget to leave the lot to us. Their mothers put them up to it." He paused to marvel at his own shortsightedness.

"Fancy the sly old devil never letting on he was worth a fortune." He shook his head over the duplicity of human nature. "Wonder how much he's worth, Meg?"

She considered. "There was an old fellow who died like a pauper in New York in a house stuffed with bank notes and share certificates."

"Hemell!" exclaimed du Preez. "He might be lying up there on a mattress stuffed with fivers. You ought to change the mattress, Meg, slip it out one day."

"You couldn't slip a needle past that one," mourned his wife, casting one eye involuntarily towards the ceiling over which they heard the heavy tread of nurse Botha, endless in her vigil over the dying man.

IV

One morning a long legal-looking envelope addressed to nurse Botha was found in the postbox. An instinct that went deeper than ordinary curiosity compelled Mrs. du Preez to steam it

open. Its stiff legal phraseology informed her that Edward Silver had instructed his lawyer to inform nurse Botha that he had made her the sole beneficiary in his will.

The shock of it made Mrs. du Preez go quite limp and she sat down, deeply moved by self-pity.

"She only done it to get round him," she observed. "Now she'll do him in. Oh, the wickedness of it!" She cocked her head up to listen to nurse Botha's footsteps above, rich, happy, fortunate, scheming nurse Botha.

Yet, somehow nurse Botha seemed to be in no hurry to come into the fortune and Mr. Silver lingered on week by week, wishing to die, perversely clinging to life. The grain of morphia which had at first been sufficient to dull his pain had to be gradually increased and the time between injections shortened. Eventually, he lay in total darkness because he was unable to bear the piercing penetration of light into his skull through his eyes. At this stage, enough morphia to render anyone else in the building insensible for 48 hours held back the tide of pain for only two hours.

A sympathetic silence seemed to brood over Arcadia Mansions. The saxophone and the harmonium were never heard and Mr. Franklin, the tram-driver, who used to beat his

wife regularly every Friday night never laid a finger on her. He would raise his hand and then something would stay it and he would roll into bed instead or perhaps give her a friendly cuff that led to love-making instead of the shrill recriminations which had once resounded through the building.

How the fire began no one ever found out because the old-fashioned wood and iron relic of the early mining days of Johannesburg was almost completely destroyed. It was one of those old places which still exist amongst the brick and concrete buildings of modern Johannesburg and which have a nostalgic charm even in their dilapidation because one knows that they were once new and proudly possessed and the wrought ironwork was pointed with gold paint.

It was Miss Glenwilliam who claimed credit for discovering the fire.

"I was at my devotions," she told, "concentrating on perfection, when I smelt smoke. I opened my door and looked out into the passage and I saw to my horror that I could not see the stair light for smoke. I kept my head," she repeated this a number of times and no one was unkind enough the following day to enquire how it was that in a state of self-possession

she escaped with nothing more than a cowering shell "Present from the South Coast" snatched off the harmonium.

Almost simultaneously every door in the building burst open and frightened inhabitants ran out, screamed, and rushed down the stairs clutching precious possessions. Nick Demetrios carried his saxophone and Mr. Franklin, the tram-driver, instinctively put on his tunic over his pajamas and snatched up his peaked cap.

Nurse Botha woke instantly and ran to Mr. Silver's room, coughing in the pungent smoke. How to get him out? was the problem. How to carry him downstairs without killing him with agony? Someone must help carry the mattress.

She caught at those going down the stair. Faces blank with panic, they shrugged her off. Miss Glenwilliam scurried past in her nightdress, twittering: "Love . . . love casts out pain." All were intent to save themselves and their possessions.

When nurse Botha realized that she must hurry or she would be too late to save him herself, she entered his room and lit the shaded light in the corner. She saw that puffs of gray woolly smoke were coming in slow gouts through the warped ceiling boards and knew that it was a matter of minutes before the old dried-out building exploded in fierce flame from cellar to attic.

"What is it, nurse?" the old man asked.

She hesitated before telling him. "The building is burning, Mr. Silver. I'm just going to carry you down-stairs." She approached his bed and bent over him, meaning to snatch him up suddenly, but he gripped the bedposts with his hands and she saw his intention written in his desperately staring eyes.

"You must come," she pleaded, trying to prise him loose, but the hands which had shrunk at being bathed gripped the bedposts with frenzied, agonized strength.

"No," he gasped. "God has sent for me at last."

When she saw that he was adamant she went quickly to the burner over which she boiled water to dissolve the morphia tablets and lit it.

"Go, go," the old man pleaded and

a spurt of flame blue with wood gas came through the floor and a sudden gust of heat came from beneath.

She put six grains of morphia, a tremendous dose, in a spoon, poured water over them and passed the spoon through the flame. It boiled quickly at the edges . . . in seconds . . . then slowly began to boil all over.

Still unhurried she let it cool before drawing it up into the hypodermic syringe. As if she were giving him no more than a routine injection she searched his body with painstaking slowness to find some spot where the needle had not already entered, found one, and gently injected the merciful dose.

She stayed with him till his limbs relaxed and consciousness had slid away. Then she opened the bedroom door, put her hands before her face and plunged into the inferno.

PHRASE ORIGINS—58

SPITTING IMAGE: *One of the meanings of "spit" is "exact likeness" or "counterpart" of a person. Long ago, the expression, "the very spit of," was used in England, as in, "He is the very spit of his father." The expression was strengthened by the addition of "and fetch" or "and image." "Spit and image" was corrupted and run together, so that now we have "the spitting image," "the spitten image," and "the spit an' image."*

MORRIS ROSENBLUM

WELLINGTON KOO MEETS THE PRESS

The future of China is a major problem of international politics today. One of those most competent to state the case of the Nationalist government is Dr. Wellington Koo, the Chinese ambassador to the United States. At a recent broadcast of Meet the Press, presented by the Mutual Broadcasting System in cooperation with the editors of THE AMERICAN MERCURY, he answered several questions about his country uppermost in the minds of the American people. The broadcast is here reprinted, slightly cut.

THE participants in the broadcast, aside from Ambassador Koo, were Phelps Adams of the New York *Sun*, Ernest K. Lindley of *Newsweek*, James Reston of the New York *Times*, and Tom Reynolds of the Chicago *Sun-Times*. Lawrence E. Spivak, editor of the *MERCURY*, presided.

ADAMS: Mr. Ambassador, we've been told that the rank-and-file of the Chinese Communists are not really Communists at all, but merely agrarian revolutionaries engaged in a purely Chinese civil war. Is that true?

Koo: Well, Mr. Adams, it is true and at the same time not true. It is true to the extent that most of the Chinese people fighting in the Communist Army do not fight for any ideology; they fight in the hope of getting better conditions. But at the same time, it is not true because these people are regimented, con-

trolled and dominated by the Communist Party.

ADAMS: Is there evidence that Mr. Stalin is giving any actual military aid to these Communists in China?

Koo: I think the best authorities I could quote to answer that question are the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party themselves. Both Mao Tse-tung and the other leaders have repeatedly proclaimed that, but for the aid of the Soviet Union, they could not have succeeded.

ADAMS: We're told that Mao Tse-tung has no great love for Stalin or Russian Communism, that he's more the Tito stripe of Communist. Is there a difference, to your way of thinking, between the two?

Koo: Once more, I think I could rely best upon Mao Tse-tung's own declarations, and his declarations have always been to the effect that the Chinese Communist revolution owes everything to the aid of Russia.

LINDLEY: Dr. Koo, why is it that the Chinese have fought so much better under Communist than Nationalist leadership?

Koo: Well, I wouldn't say that they really have fought better; there have been victories and defeats on both sides. In the last twelve months, I must say, the Communist Army has been more successful because of economic deterioration in free China.

LINDLEY: In view of the fact, Mr. Ambassador, that the Communists now do control a very large part of the most important part of China, is there any practical reason why the United States, Britain, and other Western powers, should not recognize the Communist régime, at least on a *de facto* basis?

Koo: I think there are many reasons why the Communist régime in China should not be recognized. For one thing, this Chinese Communist movement is part and parcel of world Communism, and its objective is world revolution ordered from Moscow. If we are to preserve freedom and democracy in the world, then Chinese Communism is just as dangerous as Communism from Europe.

REYNOLDS: Our information in the State Department and in the Department of Defense is that no matériel from Russia was captured

by the Nationalist armies, and that there was no evidence of real Russian matériel being sent down there. Have you heard of any being sent down?

Koo: I think you're right, but the Russians didn't have to send Russian matériel in order to aid the Chinese Communists. What they did, and what they have been doing, was to send the arms which they got from the Japanese. They sent, further, German arms which the Russians took in large quantities from the German Army.

REYNOLDS: Have there been large-scale captures at any period of German arms? Our military men didn't seem to see those, sir.

Koo: Well, Mr. Reynolds, according to the recent reports, not only German arms but even Russian arms, in the last few months, have been captured.

REYNOLDS: Mr. Ambassador, where were those arms captured? There have not been very many recent Nationalist victories.

Koo: Well, two regiments of the Communist Army, coming down from Honan, were completely made prisoners, and arms taken from those regiments were, in great part, of Russian make. The evidence will be presented in the General Assembly.

RESTON: Mr. Ambassador, you have

suggested that, since the United States is trying to contain the expansion of Communism in Europe, it should do the same in the Far East. I wonder if you could tell us precisely what you believe we could do in this country to help your government.

KOO: Mr. Reston, if I may say so, your government's policy of containing Communism in Europe is a sound policy, and in order to implement that policy you've been sending them billions of dollars. Now, we think if that is to be really effective in the end, the same kind of policy must be applied to Asia, because Communism is a danger, not just to Europe, but to the whole world.

RESTON: Well, now, couldn't we follow that a little further? Are you suggesting direct intervention by force of arms by the Western powers in China? Are you suggesting a Marshall Plan for China, a Pacific Pact against the Communists in the Far East, or what?

KOO: Well —

RESTON: Or all of those things?

KOO: Mr. Reston, our hopes are very modest, if I may so. We think that if we could secure a forthright declaration of sympathy with the objective of free China in fighting against Communism, that would be something very substantial. In ad-

dition to that, we would like only to have aid in the form of light arms and a certain amount of technical assistance from your Army personnel. We don't expect you to fight the battle for us. We are quite prepared to fight it for ourselves.

LINDLEY: In view of the fact that the Nationalist Army did, at one time, have considerable help from this country, and that it has nevertheless lost China, on what practical basis can you foresee a Nationalist régime regaining control of China now that the Communists have got it?

KOO: Well, I wonder whether one could say what we have received has been very substantial.

SPIVAK: Mr. Ambassador, the American people have been told that they spent close to \$5 billion in China, and that much of it has been dissipated in graft and inefficiency. What have you to say to that?

KOO: Mr. Spivak, I have heard round figures like that, but I've never been able to see a real break-down of those figures. According to our figures, nothing like that has been received at all. Take the figures of, say, military aid after V-J Day. It amounts to about \$700 million, out of which \$330 million, really, was not for arms and ammunition, but for services in transporting Chinese troops to Manchuria. That leaves a

little over \$300 million. So this figure of \$5 billion is something we can't quite understand.

ADAMS: Our officials tell us that we've extended about \$2 billion in military aid to China, apart from all other expenditures over there, and that 90 per cent of the military equipment we have given to the Chinese Nationalist government has shown up in Communist hands, either through capture or through some corrupt connivance of the Nationalist agents. Can you answer that for us?

KOO: I think it is true that some of it has gone into the hands of the Communists. In the last twelve months, our Army has lost more often than it has won. When you say 90 per cent of the American equipment, it sounds like a great deal, but when you consider that the American equipment constitutes only 17 per cent of the total Chinese equipment, the figure isn't so striking.

LINDLEY: Regardless of the percentage of American aid to the Chinese army, you would concede that the Nationalist armies at one time had at least equality in arms and numbers with the Communists. Now they haven't got it. What can you do with a few light arms, or any other practical form of aid that the United States might extend, which

would enable you to have any real hope of reconquering China?

KOO: Well, if we could receive more light arms in addition to what we make ourselves, the effect of it would be, not only on the material side, but also morally, spiritually, it would indicate that the United States and China, after all, are fighting for the same cause. We think we are, although opinion may differ in this country.

REYNOLDS: But isn't it true, Mr. Ambassador, that there is no major Nationalist army now standing in China capable of challenging the Communists?

KOO: Well, there are still two or three armies.

REYNOLDS: There were armies at Canton, but the Army ordered rear-guard action and left Canton without a major engagement.

KOO: That was done deliberately by our Army high command in order to exchange space for time, because we have to conserve our resources and withdraw to the places it would be easier to defend.

REYNOLDS: Where you're conserving those resources, isn't it true that you're exchanging space for time in which you will lose completely?

KOO: Well, we still haven't given up hope, you know, that those democratic countries would in the end come to realize that the Chinese

problem is part of the world problem.

SPIVAK: How long can the Nationalists hold out if they don't get any more aid than they're getting from us now, in your judgment?

KOO: That's a rather delicate question to answer publicly, but I should think that if we get nothing at all from outside, we would be able to hold for perhaps three to six months. But that does not mean the end of resistance. Even if we lose out entirely, we would still retire to the mountainous region of southwestern China and continue the fight to the best of our ability.

ADAMS: The question that bothers us most is, do the people of China want the Nationalist government saved? In other words, could the Communists have made the advances that they have made without the great popular support of the people of China?

KOO: Let me give you a very frank answer, Mr. Adams. Before the Communists overran Central China, a good many of our people felt that perhaps things couldn't get worse if the Communists should reign, and they took a pacifist attitude. But after their experience under Communist rule, they at last have found out that life under Communist domination is far worse than under free China. Their sympathy

is turning now in support of the National government.

SPIVAK: Mr. Ambassador, do you think there is anything to the theory that Russia will bite off more than she can swallow in China, that eventually she'll choke on China?

KOO: I think that's wishful thinking. With the technique developed by the Communist Party and the Soviet Union, it will not be difficult for them to turn to their advantage the tremendous manpower and natural resources of Asia.

RESTON: Mr. Ambassador, are you suggesting that there is no real difference between the Communists' ability to conquer a small Slavic state in the East of Europe and an enormous oriental state without communications, such as China?

KOO: Well, Mr. Reston, I think it's only a matter of time. If no outside aid comes to China, it's only a matter of time before international Communism will be able to take hold of China. The Russians, I think, realize that, and that is the reason that, in the last two months, they have been sending literally hundreds of technicians, of experts of all kinds — administrative, engineering, cultural, mining, economic — to help the Chinese Communists.

SPIVAK: I'm sorry to interrupt, Dr. Koo. Our time is up.

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF "DIRTY" WORDS

BY FALK JOHNSON

A PRIM old lady avoids all mention of it if she can, but if she has to mention it, she hesitates a moment and then calls it the *posterior*. A soldier, on the other hand, does not hesitate at all to call it *fanny*, and he may, as a matter of fact, use a word that is even "worse" than *fanny*.

Though words pertaining to sex are ranked one below the other on the conventional scale of propriety, they are not fixed on this scale. On the contrary, nice words like *posterior* often drop down to the level of not-too-nice words like *fanny*; and the not-too-nice words come climbing up the scale, some of them attaining complete respectability. They are as volatile and irrepressible as sex itself, and they refuse to stay put.

A well known word which has recently moved down the scale is *fraternize*. Before World War II, *fraternize* meant "to associate with upon a comradely basis," and it stood high on the scale. But after English-speaking soldiers entered Germany and

started using the word to designate associations more intimate than comradely, the word started moving down the scale. It had dropped part of the way by the time soldiers were saying, "It's all right to fraternize if you don't smile or take your helmet off." And it has dropped some more since it has been clipped down to four-letter size: *frat*.

Another well known word which has moved down the scale within the memory of most people now living is *neck*, used as a verb. Alfred E. Hart, editor of *Phrase Origins: A Study of Familiar Expressions*, declares that not until 1927 did *neck* mean "to play amorously." But now this meaning is so well established that it is given by most of the recent dictionaries. Furthermore, this new meaning of *neck* has led to the occasional use of *giraffe*, to indicate "a person who likes necking."

Like *neck* and *fraternize*, the word *assault* once had no sexual meaning. For a long time, *assault* meant "at-

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tack," but now it often means "rape" instead of "attack." It certainly did not mean "attack" in a newspaper story which H. L. Mencken quotes in one of his volumes on the American language. In this story, a man knocked down a girl, "dragged her down the cellar steps, beat her with an iron pipe, and *then* assaulted her."

When a sexual meaning gets attached to such a word as *assault*, the word does not always lose its non-sexual meaning. *Assault* is now used with both its meanings, "rape" and "attack." In such sentences as "the man assaulted the woman," it presumably means "rape"; but in such sentences as "the assault battalion took over the town," it presumably means "attack."

II

As time passes and as words move farther and farther down the scale, they tend to lose their non-sexual meanings, and they may eventually reach the point at which their only meaning is a sexual one. A word which has almost arrived there now is *intercourse*. Today, *intercourse* is rarely used with any meaning other than "sexual intercourse."

Though it is now used almost exclusively as a sex word, it once had nothing to do with sex. When it was first recorded in the language, back in the fifteenth century, it meant

"communication to and fro between countries." Indeed, the *Oxford English Dictionary* says that at first it was used "exclusively with reference to trade." Later, in the sixteenth century, it began to mean "social communication between individuals" — for example, "frequent and habitual contact in conversation." And it kept this basic meaning of "social communication" for more than two hundred years. About 1800, however, it began to be used to indicate "sexual connexion," and today it seldom means anything else.

Before *intercourse* underwent this drastic change of meaning, it was used in sentences in a way it would never be used today. For instance, an eighteenth-century historian declared that Sir Thomas More "wrote a full account of all the intercourse he had with the Nun and her complices." And a nineteenth-century writer declared that "My hours are now best spent in affectionate intercourses." Both these writers used *intercourse* to mean "social communication" or "conversation."

Although *intercourse* has become a sex word, it has not yet become a downright "bad" word. It has not been placed under taboo, and it has not been banned from public use. In fact, it still has a fairly high degree of propriety — it is one of the few acceptable synonyms for "copulation."

Even so, it is not as proper as it once was; it has obviously started down the scale of propriety.

A word which has gone even farther down the scale is *whore*. It is now such a bad word that it has been banned in some places. But *whore*, too, was once a good word. It was good enough to be used repeatedly in the King James Version of the Bible, which was published a little over three hundred years ago. At that time it had the same meaning which it has today, but it was regarded as an acceptable word. Comparative philologists say that *whore* had the same origin as the Latin word *carus*, which meant "dear" and from which the modern English word *caress* is derived. It seems likely, therefore, that *whore* and *dear* and *caress* had the same degree of respectability at one time. In fact, it seems likely that *whore* was once a term of outright endearment, just as *sweetheart* and *darling* now are.

The degeneration of *whore* from a term of endearment to a term of reproach, from a sweet word to an insulting word, is by no means a rarity. Other words which were once innocent have dropped farther down the scale than *whore* has. For example, the well-known four-letter word for "copulate" is probably the worst word in the language now. Almost everybody shies away from it in pub-

lic, as if it were leprous. And yet it, too, is only a degenerated word — a good word gone bad.

Professor Allen Walker Read of the Department of English at Columbia University has published a scholarly article about this word, and he has shown clearly that the word was once an honorable one. As recently as 1775, it was printed in a dictionary edited by a Baptist minister, John Ash; and a few centuries before that it did not have a "bad" meaning — not even a sexual meaning. It meant simply "to knock," and it was probably used as freely as the word *knock* is now used. The early propriety of this worst of words is further suggested by another fact — namely, that many words which are now considered eminently respectable (words such as *pugilist*, *puncture*, *appoint*, and even *punctuation*) are derived from the same prehistoric parent-word as this worst of words.

All these examples of good words gone bad show, as Professors Greenough and Kittredge of Harvard have said, that "Descent is easy, and words, like people, show a propensity to fall away from their better selves." Indeed, it is possible that all the words which are now regarded as bad were once regarded as good — that all the words which are now near the bottom of the scale of propriety were once near the top.

III

As words and expressions move down the scale of propriety, they leave gaps in the vocabulary at the top of the scale, and these gaps must be filled. If they were not filled, an intolerable situation would exist — a situation in which it would be impossible to talk about “bad” things with “good” words. To avoid this situation, people must improvise; they must contrive to get new and good words to convey the old and bad meanings.

Such an improvisation is illustrated by a story which H. L. Mencken tells. A few years ago, Georgia Sothern, a strip-tease artist, wrote him and explained that her profession was often criticized because “the unfortunate word *strip-teasing* . . . creates the wrong connotations in the mind of the public.” She requested him to “coin a new and more palatable word” to replace it.

From several words which he proposed, she selected *ecdysiast*, which is derived from a zoölogical term meaning “one who sheds an outer cuticular layer,” and her press agent ballyhooed this word in an attempt to make it a permanent part of the language. To some extent he succeeded, for Miss Sothern’s professional organization became known as the “Association of Ecdysiasts, Parade and

Specialty Dancers.” Furthermore, the word was picked up and used by several newspapers and magazines. Only a couple of years ago, *Time* magazine employed it in describing the variety of guests invited to appear on the campuses of American colleges at “after hours” gatherings. Among these guests, said *Time*, were “Republicans, Democrats, Communists, and ecdysiasts.” As a result of such widespread use in magazines and newspapers, *ecdysiast* has been admitted officially into the language; it now appears in at least one of the newer dictionaries.

Of course, such words as *ecdysiast* are euphemisms: excessively nice words used for describing something that is not nice. But these euphemisms do not always remain nice. On the contrary, they often start slipping down the scale of propriety. Though they start out as excessively nice words, they gradually become simply nice words . . . then not-nice words . . . then vulgar words . . . and, finally, even unprintable words.

An example of an excessively nice word which has become simply a nice word is *intercourse*. And an example of an excessively nice word which has become vulgar is *whore*. Though *whore* certainly does not seem euphemistic today, there can be little doubt that it was once euphemistic. Professor Leonard Bloomfield of Yale Uni-

versity says that it "must have been at one time a polite substitute for some word now lost to us."

As the history of *whore* suggests, the degenerative process involves more than a single word; it involves a whole series of words. Thus, when one euphemism degenerates, another is improvised to take its place. Then, when the second euphemism degenerates, a third is improvised . . . then a fourth . . . a fifth . . . a sixth — until a whole series of words, one after another, is pulled down the scale.

The sex words thus headed downhill sometimes take with them yet other words — words which are not concerned with sex but merely sound like a sex word. An example of this projected degeneration is the Biblical word for "donkey," which has become almost unmentionable except in the pulpit and in Sunday School.

Vance Randolph, an authority on the customs of the Ozarks, has found many examples of such projected degeneration. In a study made some years ago of "Verbal Modesty in the Ozarks," he tells of a "grown-up mountain woman, the mother of several children, who blushed scarlet when she heard *physics* mentioned as a part of the high-school curriculum." And he reports that the local experts with the shotgun do not "cock" it. Instead, they "pull back both roost-

ers." Randolph reports, too, that other people refer to "cock and bull" stories as "rooster and ox" stories.

Likewise, when Professor J. M. Steadman, Jr., made a study of verbal modesty at Emory University in Georgia, one student wrote: "I avoid *circumscribe* because I am afraid that I will say *circumcise* by mistake." Other students indicated that they avoided such words as *butt*, *Butte*, *rumpus*, and *elicit*.

Projected degeneration, then, often accompanies actual degeneration, and each new wave of actual degeneration may be accompanied by a corresponding new wave of projected degeneration. As a result, hundreds or perhaps even thousands of words have moved down the scale of propriety, and some of them have dropped all the way to the bottom.

IV

The wholesale movement of words down the scale is partly counter-balanced by an opposite movement — a movement up the scale. Some words which were once considered unprintably bad are now considered good and are now printed everywhere.

One of these redeemed words is *pants*. In the 1880s, an American book on verbal etiquette declared that *pants* was an "inexcusable vulgarism." Further evidence that *pants* was once taboo in this country is to be found in

the large number of euphemisms which were invented as substitutes for it. Among them were *unmentionables*, *unwhisperables*, *unutterables*, *inexpressibles*, *indescribables*, *ineffables*, *inexplicables*, *indispensables*, *innominables*, *limb-shrouders*, *nether garments*, and even *nether continuations*.

At the time that it was unrefined to call pants pants, it was unthinkable to call a leg a leg, even if it were only a chicken leg. So people had to euphemize. Some of them are said to have called it a *second-wing*, and one lady is said to have told a waiter in a hotel "to bring her the *trotter* of a chicken." The euphemistic impulse is seen, too, in a regulation for a fashionable female academy of the time. This regulation read: "Young ladies are not allowed to cross their *benders* in school." And yet another nineteenth-century writer, commenting upon the taboo on *leg*, observed that the ankles of ladies extended all the way up to the waist.

Captain Frederick Marryat, an Englishman who visited this country in 1839, tells a story which shows how unspeakably bad the word *leg* was then. One day, a young American woman who was walking with him fell and hurt her leg. When he asked, "Did you hurt your leg much?" she acted as though he had committed a "heinous offence." Then, said the Captain, "I begged to know what was

the reason for her displeasure. After some hesitation, she said that as she knew me well, she would tell me that the word *leg* was never mentioned before ladies."

By the beginning of the 1900s, however, the taboo on *leg* was diminishing. But it was not gone. In a middle-sized Iowa town as recently as thirty years ago, the word *leg* was thought by some to be indecent. Professor Allen Walker Read recalls that "the wife of a prominent lawyer had broken her leg, and when my mother innocently asked the lawyer, 'How is your wife's leg?' he publicly reprimanded her before a large group: 'Limb, Mrs. Read! You mean limb!'"

But a little more than ten years ago, almost no one objected to the use of *leg*. At that time, two professors at Maryville College in Tennessee listed about sixty words, including *leg*, and submitted them to students and faculty members, requesting that each word be marked as used freely, as used with hesitancy, or as used not at all. When the questionnaires were checked, these professors learned that 95 per cent of the men and 92 per cent of the women used *leg* freely. In all likelihood, the percentages would run even higher today. At any rate, *leg* is now redeemed.

And so are many other everyday words, like *chair*, *breeches*, *petticoat*, *smock*, *shirt*, *dress*, *stockings*, and *corset*

—all of which have been reported as banned in the United States within the last hundred years or so.

Some of these words have been restored to respectability within the memory of people still living; but there are also many words which were redeemed so long ago that their redemption is not now remembered. For example, no one now living remembers when *occupy* was a bad word — so bad, in fact, that Shakespeare, who was no prude, called it an “odious” word. *Occupy* meant “to copulate,” and Ben Jonson commented that his contemporaries were avoiding its use. The *Oxford English Dictionary* says that it was avoided so carefully that it disappeared almost completely from print for more than a hundred years. When on very rare occasions it did appear in print, it appeared as often as not in bits of vulgar doggerel such as this:

All you that in your bed do lie,
Turn to your wives and occupy.

But *occupy*, like *leg* and *pants*, has been redeemed; and now, despite the activities of American occupation forces, it is a thoroughly respectable word.

Although the word *nature* may never have been banned, as *occupy* was, it once had a sexual meaning: it once meant “genitalia.” In partial proof of this, the *Oxford English*

Dictionary quotes the following clause, dated 1622: “If that great Lady had not made a vow of perpetual chastity and her nature . . . had not been stitched up . . .”

Yard, the same word now used to designate 36 inches, also had a sexual meaning. Three or four hundred years ago it was used to designate the male organ. The *Oxford English Dictionary* prints several quotations to show that the word once had this meaning. Perhaps the most remarkable of these is the one dated 1693: “A monstrous child . . . It hath three yards and makes use of them all at once.”

Likewise, most people who are now living do not realize that *converse*, *conversation*, and even *conversant*, are redeemed words, too. For a period of well over two hundred years, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the verb *converse* meant “to have sexual intercourse”; the noun *conversation* meant “sexual intercourse or intimacy”; and the adjective *conversant*, according to Dr. Samuel Johnson’s *Dictionary* of 1755, meant “cohabiting.” These dictionaries provide several examples of these words used in this way. For instance, Dr. Johnson defined *whore* as “A woman who converses unlawfully with men; a fornicatress . . .” And the *Oxford English Dictionary* gives quotations

with such expressions as "conjugal conversation" and "criminal conversation." This last phrase, meaning "adultery," was used so often that it developed an abbreviated form, *crim con*.

And at one time *correspond*, *correspondence*, and *correspondent* had sexual meanings similar to those of *converse*, *conversation*, and *conversant*. The *Oxford English Dictionary* records "sexual intercourse" as an obsolete meaning of *correspondence*, and gives similar obsolete meanings for several of the other "correspond" words. But of course most of the "correspond" words are now used without any awareness of their earlier sexual meanings. If there were a general awareness of these meanings, the International Correspondence School would certainly have to change its name.

Just as *correspondence*, *conversation*, *occupy*, *leg*, and *pants* have been redeemed and have moved up the scale of propriety, so have many other words. The British scholar Eric Partridge lists hundreds of them in his recent book, *Shakespeare's Bawdy*. Partridge shows that hundreds of Shakespeare's bawdy words have lost their bawdiness during the intervening centuries. As a result, many of the passages which were originally intended to be risqué are now considered harmless or even tedious. For ex-

ample, consider these two lines from *Hamlet*:

HAMLET: Lady, shall I lie in your lap?

OPHELIA: No, my lord.

The modern reader supposes that *lap* means, as a recent dictionary defines it, "the part of the clothing that lies on the front portion of the body from the waist to the knees when one sits." As a result, the modern reader does not realize that Hamlet is making what the newspapers would call "a lewd proposal." But Partridge points out that in Shakespeare's day *lap* often meant the *mons Oeneris*, and that *lie*, too, had a bawdy meaning in this line.

Scholarly investigations of the histories of hundreds of words make it clear, then, that sex words are not fixed unalterably upon a scale of propriety. On the contrary, these words are often on the move, dropping down the scale and climbing up it, becoming bad words at one time and good words at another.

The same, too, may be said about the standards of verbal propriety — the standards by which these words are adjudged as good or bad. These standards, too, are not fixed and unalterable. They are not absolute. They are not eternal. Instead, they are relative and temporary, and they need not be given any more weight than other temporary standards.

WHAT KEEPS BUILDING COSTS HIGH

BY HOLMAN HARVEY

TWIN houses recently were built, one on each side of the line that divides two Long Island towns. In one house the room partitions were built of panels or pre-hardened plaster board, fire-resistant, mass-produced and erected at the cost of a few hours of labor. The other house, a stone's throw away, had partitions of lath and plaster, built the slow way by highly skilled labor. Two building codes were in conflict. One village code permits dry-wall construction, the other demands wet-wall construction.

Dry-wall construction is permitted by most nationally established safety standards for one- and two-family houses, yet many building codes still insist on lath and plaster. The difference in cost in a five-room house on Long Island, for example, is something like \$250 or more, largely for labor.

This is just one illustration, selected at random from thousands, of the senseless tangle of building codes enforced by more than two thousand American towns and cities. The codes

strangle progress in the building industry. Manufacturers of materials and supplies cannot standardize their products and get the economy of mass production, because they have to make a score of sizes, designs and models to obey the varying regulations of different localities. This is one reason that homes cost too much. Another reason is that hundreds of codes are out of date and thus prevent or delay the use of anything new — and there are scores of new things in the building industry, most of them designed to save the home builder money.

The situation has been a scandal and a source of despair to progressive builders and manufacturers for years. So many of the regulations seem based on pure whim. One county in New York State — Nassau county on Long Island — has 65 different building codes; three of them, covering about 50 per cent of current building, differ in 200 particulars. It would be impossible to draw plans and specifications for a home that would be legal every-

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where in this one county. There are good reasons sometimes for differences in codes. For example, Albany insists that roofs be strong enough to carry a snow load of 50 pounds per square foot. Such a requirement would be ridiculous in Miami. But there is no good reason whatever for variations within the small flat urban county of Nassau.

William Levitt, America's biggest home builder, who puts up 10,000 homes in one continuing operation, says that costs can be boosted from 5 to 25 per cent by the various local codes in Nassau County.

Codes in many midwestern communities say that basement walls must be twelve inches thick where the U. S. government accepts eight inches as adequate. Millions of sound American homes have been built with eight-inch basement walls, and some have endured for a century. Added cost on an average home: well over \$100.

Many codes demand that a chimney be built of brick or stone, by masons. A pre-manufactured flue can be had at a saving of about \$55 in the Washington, D. C. area, up to \$150 in some parts of the country, and be just as safe. The building codes of New York and many other cities do not permit the use of pre-manufactured chimneys, although at least three leading makes have been listed by national fire-safety laboratories

and accepted by the U. S. government.

Many local codes ban simplified designs for roofs, furthered by the U. S. Housing and Home Finance Agency, that would save \$80 per average house; and new Government-approved designs for septic tanks can save \$150 more where central plumbing is not available. A combined saving of \$230.

II

Your local building code comes down from centuries of human experience with habitations. It exists to insure your physical safety, and your health, as a dweller. Under safety come protection against fire; against collapse of roof, walls or floors — due to snow loads, windstorms, earthquakes or other causes; safety of the foundation against moisture, rodents and insects; safety against noxious fumes from plumbing and sewerage. Under health come ventilation, light, sufficient space and the cleanliness of a weather-tight dwelling. But on all of these basic points local building codes are in violent conflict. What is held to be safe or healthful by one community is ruled out by its neighbor.

In heavily populated areas where housing is most needed, local codes are entrenched, backed by police powers delegated by the states in the early days of the country. Town coun-

cils may enforce any code they wish.

In one Pennsylvania county — Allegheny, where Pittsburgh lies — 129 subdivisions maintain 129 diverse codes. Of Pittsburgh's own code, adopted in 1947, the National Association of Home Builders says it is so restrictive that builders can no longer erect low-cost housing. Modest homes built in the outskirts must have the Class A plumbing of a mid-town skyscraper.

Honest difference of opinion is responsible for many of the variations in building codes. In addition, pressure lobbies work at the local town hall for code amendments which will serve their ends; and hundreds of codes have been subverted to protect subcontractors with materials to sell, labor groups determined to keep as many men as possible at work on your house, and manufacturers seeking to exclude superior products. For instance:

Plumbing brings water into the home and takes waste from it, and several kinds of pipe will serve satisfactorily. But many codes insist on lead plumbing, others demand galvanized steel, still others demand cast iron. Fitting lead joints requires skilled hand labor. But copper piping, which also does not rust, can be bent around corners, eliminating an enormous amount of labor. Many codes flatly rule it out, by the negative

process of specifying one of the other metals.

In 1947, the National Bureau of Standards set up three typical plumbing systems for small houses, using transparent plastic piping to study the flow. It found that "back venting" of plumbing fixtures was only one of several acceptable methods; and in even earlier studies it was found that a "house trap" to seal off sewer gases was not needed under ordinary circumstances. These devices add substantially to building cost, but code authorities cling to them, supported by subcontractors and local labor groups. Another instance:

Although the National Electrical Code for years has recognized flexible electric cable, which can be bent around corners, codes bar it for most purposes in some communities, including Elizabeth, N. J., Baltimore, Peoria, Ill., Milwaukee, Los Angeles and Burbank, Cal., and Colorado Springs. In most of these, and in a number of other communities, rigid metal conduit or electrical metallic tubing, requiring hand-fitted joints, is demanded — at greatly increased expense.

Costs pile up, and the nation's inventive genius is frustrated in almost every attempt to reduce them as it has done in all other major industries.

Many new materials have emerged in the past ten years or so which re-

duce the cost of home building or increase efficiency. But 55 per cent of community codes are more than ten years old — 12 per cent older than 25 years. When they were drafted they specified the use of materials then known to be dependable. Among modern materials discriminated against in many outdated codes are: Foam-glas, a highly efficient insulation material developed in the laboratories of Pittsburgh Corning; plastic wall tile; composition wallboard of various types; glass brick; and rustless aluminum nails.

Some older American communities impose excessive code restrictions to exclude low-cost housing. Not long ago a New York State village used its code, by abruptly amending it, to block erection of 300 new homes. A Pennsylvania town similarly kept out \$10 million worth of needed new housing, wishing to preserve a local architectural tradition against "mass building." But exterior design might better be controlled under the community's zoning power, or by a local fine arts commission, rather than by code restrictions which increase the cost of functional, invisible parts of a home. Higher costs have little to do with acceptable design, and low-cost homes, well planned, may take their place in any setting.

The first effort to prepare a basic building code for nation-wide use

came from the National Board of Fire Underwriters, in 1905; their recommended National Building Code, now in its sixth major revision, has been widely consulted and used.

About 35 years ago, harassed local building officials began to work toward the ideal of a standard code; and in 1927 the Pacific Coast Building Officials Conference issued its Uniform Code — now in use, in whole or in part, by a large majority of West Coast communities and by others as far east as the Mississippi and beyond. It has been revised at three-year intervals. Ten years later, the New England Building Officials Conference issued a uniform code in mimeograph form, but it was not kept up to date. Four years ago, the Southern Building Code Congress published a standard code now in use by 150 communities. It emphasizes Southern materials and practices. The Building Officials Conference of America, founded more than 30 years ago, began to evolve, four years ago, a new kind of uniform code — the "performance code."

III

A performance code, advocated since the 1920s by the U. S. government, demands only that a building material "perform" according to a prescribed standard. A wall, for instance, must resist fire for at least 45

minutes, whatever it may be made of. Any material, old or new, which meets the required standard becomes automatically acceptable. A real performance code could never be outdated and would never require revision. Its simple performance requirements keep it abreast of latest improvements as they arise.

But today the country's local codes, as well as the standard regional codes (sold to communities at around \$3 a copy), are mainly "specification codes." They specify precisely the kind of materials which can be used, and the exact sizes and amounts of those materials; and materials not mentioned are not used. Philadelphia and other cities have specified for years that partition framing shall measure two-by-three inches, whereas other cities say it shall be two-by-four inches. To keep a specification code current would require a revision at least once every three years, at great expense.

In preparing its first comprehensive performance-type code, to be published late this year, the Building Officials Conference of America, Inc., with headquarters in New York City, has spent \$90,000, with no compensation for the 100 experts who participated. (An abridged code for structures up to three stories, known as the ABC, was issued last January.) Already inquiries have come from all

quarters of the world, for code troubles are universal. The National Association of Home Builders, composed mostly of newly-called "merchant builders" who will erect this year some 80 per cent of the nation's new houses, has approved the BOCA code, and its 130 local associations have set up committees to work for its adoption by communities. The nationally recognized architect, Carl G. Lans, will coordinate the program. Leading national manufacturers of housing materials also support the new code and the idea behind it.

Under the BOCA plan, the maker of a new material or device will pay a recognized, independent laboratory to test it under supervision of the Building Official's Foundation, affiliated with the Association. If the product fulfills the performance standard set up by the code it will be certified as acceptable. Test reports are to be made monthly to local building officials.

At the same time, the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency is working on a performance-type code exclusively for small dwellings, which is expected to be completed within five years. Last year, this Agency issued a uniform plumbing code, now substantially followed by BOCA.

State-wide codes would relieve local officials of the staggering respon-

sibility which lies upon them today, and would simplify the housing problem of the nation. Each state could modify a standard national code to meet its own geographical conditions of snow, high winds, earthquakes or exceeding moisture. At least eight states now have state-wide building statutes of limited scope; only a few of these cover one- and two-family houses. Massachusetts' 1947 law is the most advanced. A board of standards can approve new materials, and methods of construction, and all communities must permit their use regardless of their local code restrictions. Any Massachusetts town can have its code modernized at state expense. But Massachusetts allows the *enforcement* of local codes to stay where it belongs—in the hands of the community.

Prefabricated housing has suffered severe reverses because of building codes, and this is one reason that many of the concerns which started out ambitiously after the war, with hundreds of millions of dollars of invested capital, are now in near bankruptcy.

A hard-hitting drive to bring order and unity into the making and en-

forcing of building codes has now begun over the nation, and your help as a citizen is needed. Enlist the support of your civic association, club or lodge, or organize a special group for local code reform. Make it clear to members of your town government that you want *your* town to act now to bring about a single, state-wide, uniform code, based on modern performance standards. Insist that your state legislators support legislation to establish such a code, and make it mandatory.

Your local newspapers will help. The National Association of Home Builders will send you a complete program of action, including prepared speeches; and will send speakers to visit your group from the nearest of its 130 campaign committees. Perhaps one of these committees already is at work in your town. An inquiry to NAHB headquarters, Washington, D. C., will bring an immediate response at no cost.

Unification of the nation's building codes is a primary necessity if construction costs are to be brought down and America is to be well and comfortably housed in the years ahead.



DOWN TO EARTH

by ALAN DEVOE



ANTHROPOMORPHISM FOREVER

ANTHROPOMORPHISM is a long and difficult word for a very easy and almost spontaneous human practice: the ascription of human characteristics to things not human. A carpenter anthropomorphizes when, having trouble driving a nail, he says that "it doesn't seem to want to go in." A housewife anthropomorphizes when she mislays a thimble and wonders irritatedly where it is "hiding." It is anthropomorphism when we talk to our automobile, urging it up a hill or chiding it for stalling, and it is anthropomorphism again when, having stumbled against a chair in the dark, we kick the wretched thing for its impudence. Anthropomorphism pervades all our life, coloring and enlivening it, peopling the empty places, mitigating a little the terrible fact of our aloneness.

Where anthropomorphism is con-

cerned with inanimate objects, it is seldom, of course, more than half serious. We do not suppose that chairs and walking-sticks "really" have personalities like ours. We do not suppose that actually we will induce the dice to fall in a certain position, when we plead with them and coax them before the throw. We do not believe that, after we have driven a golf ball, we can really influence it to change its course by all those agonized body-twistings and grunts of encouragement. We do not believe these things, at any rate, with the rational part of our conscious mind. But there is an area, deep down in the subconscious, where we believe them. Philosophers engage in everyday anthropomorphism as incurably as witch-doctors. Our own self is the one thing in the world that each of us really *knows*, by immediate experience; and it is an everlastingly natural gesture to project that self everywhere, to read it into our fellow creatures and objects

of all sorts, to see the universe in terms of it. In the crudest anthropomorphism, an interior "I" like our own is seen residing in every leaf, stick and pebble; and however sophisticated we become, something of this feeling, deep down, remains. In our primitive depths, we are all animists, anthropomorphists, and workers of sympathetic magic.

Though the anthropomorphizing of nails and chairs and golf balls is only a sort of half-joke, an indulged remnant from primitive naïveté, the anthropomorphizing of living creatures is more serious in mood. In a bird or an animal, after all, we see a fellow creature that is indwelt by the same life-principle that quickens ourselves. We see a creature moving about, as we do; breathing and feeding and sleeping and begetting its kind, as we do; and exhibiting, like ourselves, evidences of interior states of happiness, fear, gaiety, love, sadness, perplexity, hate. We look into the eyes of an animal, and there seems to be looking out at us an *anima* with which we are in kinship. We look at animals going about their activities — building complicated homes, constructing dams, performing rituals of courtship, and so on — and it appears to us that they are living lives very much like our own. Irresistibly these similarities lead us to identify our world and the animals' world, their

selves and our selves. It is a safe guess that the first man, when he saw the first animal, anthropomorphized; and we have continued ever since.

Now in a certain profound sense, of course, this anthropomorphism is not merely just but essential. We *are* in kinship with all living things; and we can understand their interior lives at all only in terms of our own. We must assume that to be a wolf is something like being a person; and we can "get inside" any animal imaginatively only by knowing what it is like, so to speak, inside ourself. The great difficulty, however, is that if we are to be anything like accurate in our understanding, we have constantly to remember that though the animal self and our self are indeed akin, the animal self is our self not in our stage of adult intelligence but at various stages of our infancy and very early youth. An ape's self is our self, but our self when we are only three or four years old. A tadpole's self is our self, but our self when still foetal. An animal feels joy and fear and love and all the other emotions; but we have to remember that it feels them as we felt them when we were a little child, and that it is moved to them by such things as moved us then. And all the while, too, if we would be accurate in our understanding, we have to remember the animal's special sensory equipments, which make its life-

experience different from ours, and its want of those imaginings and abstract valuing by which, in our world, we step outside time and are set free of the mere immediacy of impulse.

All these considerations are obviously far too much of a nuisance to be generally borne in mind. Having noted that animals and ourselves are essentially alike, who shall be bothered to blur the sweet simplicity of that fact with all these exceptions and scrupulous qualifications? And so anthropomorphism, a valid thing in itself, has down through the ages been a wild and reckless thing. It has equated animals with people exactly, *tout court*. Has an old bison tumbled over a cliff? Ah, poor fellow, he was aged and not well; he has committed suicide. Does a young robin happen to be perching on a branch near where an adult robin is building a nest? Ah, the wise old mother is teaching her young one the art of nest-making. Do we accidentally tread on a snake, and, passing its corpse later, find another snake beside the body? This must be the dead one's mate, and it is grieving. By such unqualified and unreserved anthropomorphism do we create a fantasy-world which bears no trace of relevance to real natural history. Animals do have personalities; they do have their kinship to us; they do have remarkable canninesses and subtle sensings and lively emotions. But

what this total anthropomorphism does is to lift them into full humanity; and to do that is to turn from sense to nonsense.

Such nonsense, however, is fun. It makes the world a more exciting place. It spreads throughout the otherwise somewhat intimidating impersonality of the world of nature the warmly familiar quality of *human* nature. Whole-souled anthropomorphism is much easier than judicious anthropomorphism, and more amusing; and the result is that hard-headed people believe eagerly, happily, and tenaciously certain mythical tales about animals that are as preposterous as any dream of Aesop's. These tales solidify into folklore. They find their way into newspapers as fillers. They become pretty nearly indestructible.

II

There are two such tales, in particular, that keep coming up as dependably as the rounds of the seasons. Every naturalist probably gets them in his mail. Whenever there arrives a letter from Russia or Poland, the chances are better than even that it will turn out to contain either the "remarkable true story" of the storks or the positively authentic episode, as eyewitnessed by Ivan's grandfather, of the snake and the milk. Occasionally these stories come from other countries — the snake-tale is popular, apparently,

in Turkey, and the stork story is scattered all through Europe — but Russia and Poland seem to be their homeland. They may well date back, these yarns, to the dawn of time. They are the two outstanding triumphs of Anthropomorphism Unlimited; and for what significance they may have in this respect — or just to brighten a few minutes of a too-sober January day — they are here set down for the record.

In the first story our scene is Warsaw (or Vilna or possibly Cracow). A pair of storks have made their nest atop a householder's chimney. In prankish spirit, or just to see what will happen, the man clambers up to his roof and places a hen's egg among the stork-eggs in the nest. All the eggs hatch successfully, storklets and chick apparently simultaneously. And then, along about that time, the father stork comes to the nest. He sees the strange infant among the others. Immediately he utters a tremendous outcry, which brings all the storks in the neighborhood. They all peer into the nest, and then they palaver together. The upshot is that they swoop *en masse* upon the mother stork, pecking and buffeting her until life is extinct. The householder, who watches all this, is smitten with horror at what he has done. For he realizes, of course, that the storks have mistakenly judged the mother stork to be guilty

of infidelity and have executed her for her sins.

That is the first tale. It is told by judges, diplomats, clergymen and philosophers. They feel sure that they can almost remember the exact street address at which the thing occurred. Or, well, at any rate, everybody knows that it really happened, and cousin Paul's great uncle was himself there at the time, or nearly so.

For our second story, the scene is a Russian farmhouse. In the room where the action occurs, there is a massive bedstead and also, on the floor or hearth, an open container of milk . . . some sort of jug or crock or the like. It is the day when Mrs. Petroff is giving the place a thorough cleaning. As she hauls the great bedstead away from the wall, to dust behind it, there is disclosed a mother snake with a brood of young ones. Petroff, summoned by screams, comes hurrying in and begins grabbing up the infant serpents. One would say that he is going to kill them. At this, the mother snake slips away unobtrusively, but not so unobtrusively that her amazing action now goes unobserved. She is seen to glide balefully to the Petroffs' crock of milk and spit poison into it.

The end? Oh no. Petroff, it seems, is no brutal peasant. He does not kill the baby snakes. He just takes them outdoors and sets them free. When

the mother snake gets out of the house she finds, to her surprise and joy, that her babies are alive and well. But her rejoicing is suddenly cut short by realization of the terrible thing she has unjustly done to the Petroffs' milk. She whips back into the house, glides quickly to the crock, and with an adroit flick of her sinuous body overturns the poisoned milk so no one can drink it.

And there we are. The story is too remarkable to believe? Ah, but it was the teller's own grandfather's clergyman who personally heard it from the tax-collector of Omsk. And after all, you know, animals are very much like people; and who shall say that even a

lowly snake is to be denied thinking its own wise thoughts in its own wise way and having a kind heart even as you and I, tovarish?

Man may advance from knowledge to knowledge, but anthropomorphism goes on forever. The tale of the snake and the milk was undoubtedly being whispered behind the Urals long before Ivan the Terrible, and it is a safe bet that a century or two from now, if there are any men to tell tales, it will be a fresh wonder. Scientifically speaking, no doubt, this everlasting persistence of whole-souled anthropomorphism is a lamentable thing. But humanly speaking, somehow, it is hard not to be delighted.

POET'S RETURN

BY M. WHITCOMB HESS

Greater than Ulysses' has been his wandering
Who, like a bird-of-paradise (hidden in the loam,
Wingspent and outcast) hears his brothers sing,
Has heard the mystic bell branch sound his summons home:

For him this sky's immensity (for him the music trills)
Beyond the rage of Cyclops, the one-eyed of the hills;
The lost one, the wanderer, straight to his song returns
And all the others singing where the Daystar burns.

THE CONCORD COACH

BY STEWART H. HOLBROOK

Two of the really great influences on what is commonly called the winning of the West came ready-made out of New England. One was Mr. Colt's Patent Revolving Pistol, manufactured in Hartford, Conn.; the other was the Concord coach, built in the New Hampshire town from which the celebrated vehicle took its name. Both the gun and the carriage so permeated the old West that no romance of the time and place, either on paper or celluloid, is complete without them; they are instantly recognizable to millions of Americans who know absolutely nothing about them save that the one was used to hold up and rob the other.

Samuel Colt has now been given a modest place in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, but the perfectionists who devised America's most romantic piece of rolling stock remain unsung in its pages. One hopes that this oversight will be remedied in one of the *Dictionary's* supplementary volumes, and at least two of the Concord's builders be given recognition.

They are Lewis Downing and J. Stephen Abbot; and they reached their peak on the fifteenth of April, 1868, when a whole trainload of their masterwork went out of Concord on flatcars — a long glittering procession of flashing vermilions and yellows — consigned, one is pleased to know, to the Messrs. Wells, Fargo & Company at Omaha and Salt Lake City, something of a classic institution themselves.

The editor of the *Concord Daily Monitor*, you may be certain, went down to the railroad yards on that April day to witness the departure of this scintillating cargo, and he could scarce contain his pride and elation. He wrote that the coaches were finished in a most superior manner and noted that each paneled door had a handsome picture on it, no two alike, and vowed they were gems of beauty that would afford study for hours. Like all of the Abbot-Downing work, these Wells-Fargo coaches were built to exact order. They were somewhat larger and stronger than city coaches,

STEWART H. HOLBROOK'S most recent book is *Little Annie Oakley and Other Rugged People*. His articles on the American past are well known to readers of the *MERCURY*.

and weighed 2250 pounds each. They were designed to seat "nine persons inside, and eight or ten outside." The best part "of fourteen sides of leather were used upon each coach" for the boot and thorough braces. Everything, naturally, was hand-made. The Concord coach might be and was held up and robbed on occasion. It could *not* be worn out; and it was all but indestructible when overtaken by disaster such as rolling down mountainsides of the Rockies.

II

Lewis Downing, who was born in Lexington, Mass., went to Concord, N. H., in 1813, to set up as a wheelwright. He had learned his trade thoroughly in his father's blacksmith shop, and now, at twenty-one, he owned his tools and \$60 in cash. Concord liked his work. For the next several years, he mended the chaises, the carriages, the sleds and the plows of the village; he made wooden blocks for Benjamin Kimball, Jr., the "fashionable Concord hatter"; and a few vehicles which he called Concord buggies. By 1816, he was ready to advertise his wares and also to seek an apprentice, through the columns of the excellent *Monitor*:

LEWIS DOWNING

Has constantly on hand, opposite the Concord (upper) Bank, SMALL

WAGGONS which he will sell as cheap as can be bought, and warrant them to be well made and of the best of materials. A stout BOY, 16 or 17 years of age, wanted as an apprentice at the Wheel-right Business.

April 1816

Doubtless he found an apprentice, perhaps even two, for he appears to have employed three or four men during the next decade. Then, in 1826, he enlarged his shop and prepared to take an important step; he would build a stagecoach. This was a natural enough step in Concord, a center from which stage lines fanned out into Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, and northern New Hampshire. Railroads were then merely a fantastic rumor.

Downing was a workman of the greatest pride. If he were to build a coach, then it must be as good as the best if not better. He sent to Salem, Mass., for an expert, who appeared in the person of young J. Stephen Abbot, an employee — says Elmer M. Hunt of the New Hampshire Historical Society — of James Frothingham, maker and decorator of coaches, who had learned his use of paints as a pupil of no one less than Gilbert Stuart, the most eminent artist of his time. Working together in perfect harmony, Abbot and Downing, with their apprentices, devoted six months to building the first Concord coach,

which was then delivered to John Shephard of Salisbury, Mass., whom it seems "had a fancy for the stage business."

Lewis Downing had found in Stephen Abbot an artisan after his own honest heart. The two formed a partnership and for the next twenty years their constantly enlarged shop turned out coaches that seemed to improve with every rig. They did not, of course, invent the stagecoach, which had come from England; yet they devised many an improvement, always seeking to strengthen as well as lighten the vehicle, and so modified the whole as to have a just claim for inventing the American stagecoach.

Abbot and Downing had no difficulty selling their product, and presently they were building their coaches to order. Competitors found it difficult if not impossible to match "the lightness, durability and elegance of finish" of the Concord brand. In 1847, the partnership was dissolved, and Abbot retained the old shops, while Downing, with sons Lewis and Alonzo, erected a new manufactory and continued to make coaches. The Downings came to use eleven forges and 80 men. The Abbot plant grew even larger and in 1865, when the two concerns were merged, was employing 200 men.

Both families had achieved reputations for sound work; and the con-

solidated firm of Abbot, Downing & Company was just as rigid in its integrity. (Old Downing himself constantly ranged the shops, seeing everything and saying little, but when he noted a piece of faulty work, he picked up a hammer without a word and smashed or otherwise ruined it so that it must be done over. It may have been an expensive method of discipline but it brought results.) The care began in the forest, where this or that one of the Abbots or Downings selected the best trees of white ash and white oak, which were then felled, taken to the shop, sawed to length, split for spokes, and piled in the yard to season. The elm for hubs got the same treatment; they were turned in the rough, the ends painted, and then piled on racks in an upper room of the shop. The panels were of selected basswood and were curved by the slow process of clamping their edges around a form, putting them in front of an open fire, and intermittently moistening them, until they were properly shaped. When an axle was ready for the thread, four stout men took hold of four levers of a die and walked around in a circle until the thread was made. Abbot-Downing held to a firm belief that time was of less value than quality. . . .

Master workman and apprentices alike worked what might be termed a full day; that is, a period varying

from twelve to fourteen hours, depending on the appearance of the sun, as proclaimed by the *New England Farmer's Almanack*, and its setting. Despite these rigorous hours, Abbot-Downing's employees stayed around a long time. One record shows that twenty of them had worked a total of 614 years for the company, and all were doubtless pleased with the fine gold-headed canes which the firm presented to all of its veterans.

The Concord coach not only became stronger as it became lighter; it also grew more decorative. The last half of the nineteenth century was a time of high decorative fancy, and Abbot-Downing held up their end in the arts. They secured a young Englishman, John Burgum, whose talents were so apparent at once that he was made "chief ornamenteer," and for the next fifty years he and his stable of competent young men made every Concord coach a thing of beauty, or at least something that could not very well be ignored.

III

After about 1850, the expanding railroads were a creeping threat to the makers of stagecoaches, but Abbot-Downing had another forty years of prosperous business, including the manufacture of horsecars for lines in Washington, Cincinnati, and several New England cities. They also shipped

their coaches to Australia, New Zealand, Europe and Africa. But their best market by far was in the American West. The coach business in the West came, in time, to be all but the monopoly of Abbot-Downing.

The rush of forty-nine took two Concord coaches to San Francisco, the first of many, with which Adams & Company, Wells-Fargo, and minor express outfits, carried the mails to the diggings and toted gold dust back from Hangtown, Bottle Springs, Angel's Camp, Mormon Bar, Shirt Tail Canyon, and such places, a shotgun guard on the seat beside the driver. It was to be Abbot-Downing all over again in the Pike's Peak Rush of a decade later, into Colorado. Indeed, until long after the completion of the first transcontinental railroad, Concord coaches were to travel up and down and across the old West. Incidentally, what appears to have been the last stick-up of a Concord coach took place as recently as 1893.

Along with the orders from the booming West, the firm of Abbot-Downing got a large amount of business — in the sixties and seventies — right at home, as the White Mountain resort industry got into high gear. For this fancy trade they turned out real beauties, with a landscape painting of the Great Stone Face, or the Flume, or some other natural wonder, on every door panel. These

magnificent coaches went to the Profile House, the Crawford House, Wentworth Hall at Jackson, the Fabyan House, and Thayer's at Littleton. Big-city accounts were welcome, too, so for the Sherman House in Boston the Concord artists built a nine-passenger job, with silver-plated railings and handles, a lining of red plush, on one door a pretty dancing girl, on the other a painting of the hotel. "Make it real fancy," had been the order from the Sherman House. Abbot-Downing was happy to comply.

New York's best hotels sent to New Hampshire for their coaches to meet all the trains and ships. Abbot-Downing built one or more each for the Astor, Brevoort, Fifth Avenue, and many others. They built coaches, too, for hotels in the Carolinas, in Florida, in St. Louis, and one for the Lick House in San Francisco.

Most hotel men were explicit about the door decorations. For a full decade, Stephen H. Douglas was specified by many Southern hotels. Webster, Pierce, J. Q. Adams, and Frémont were favored in the North and West. Female likenesses, however, were more popular than Presidents or statesmen, and of females the two leading in favor were Fanny Davenport and Mary Anderson. Potter Palmer of Chicago, a man who usually knew just what he wanted,

was certain about the coaches for his new Palmer House; from Abbot-Downing he ordered four, both bodies and running parts to be in canary yellow, and on each door an elaborate picture of the Palmer House itself.

Hotel coaches, horsecars, even circus wagons, they all came out of the Concord coach shops, to serve long and well; and in the West, the Concord fairly entered the American legend, assisted materially by Buffalo Bill Cody, whose Wild West show featured, at each and every performance for a quarter of a century, the one and only Deadwood Stage Coach, going full tilt, a band of howling Sioux in pursuit.

IV

The first Concords to the West Coast were shipped around the Horn to California and Oregon; but presently others were being driven across what school geographies still designated as the Great American Desert, and over the Rockies, all the way from Chicago, Kansas City, Omaha, Salt Lake, or wherever the end-of-steel happened to be at the moment. These were the big, extra-stout jobs, built to meet the jolting of mountain trails and the dryness of the plains, which were woefully hard on rims and spokes. Abbot-Downing also devised another job for the West, the California Mud Wagon, for six passengers, which was

much used by Western express and mail lines. Ben Holladay had 32 of these mud wagons in 1865. The great Butterfield Overland outfit had more than fifty. They were staunch rigs, though not beautiful.

It was the standard nine- and twelve-passenger jobs, each drawn by six horses, that made the legend of the Concord coach — that moved poets to raptures and common men to praise of lyric quality. These Western vehicles lacked the silver plating of the big-city coaches, but they were pretty handsome, too. The favored colors for the bodies were red or green; and yellow or buff for the running parts. They carried scroll-work in gold-leaf, and always a portrait or landscape on the doors, though these final touches of Abbot-Downing's decorators often met with rough usage in the West. On one occasion, the Downieville stage of Adams & Company, operating on the Mother Lode, went off a narrow cliff and rolled a good hundred feet among the boulders. Nothing broke, but the vivid landscape on the doors was scratched. One of Wells-Fargo's rigs got even rougher treatment; it went off a steep pitch in California's Nevada County, the horses still with it, to roll over and over a distance of 300 feet down into roaring Greenhorn Creek. The front wheels became detached, the door paintings mused

up; otherwise everything, including horses, passengers, even the harnesses, survived intact. Concords simply could not be broken or smashed.

More often than not an order for harness came to Concord with an order for a coach; and these, "due to an understanding," were turned over to another Concord firm, that of James R. Hill & Company, which manufactured "the most splendid harnesses made in the United States." Hill & Company were just as careful, just as thorough, and just as honest as Abbot-Downing; and it was both common and convenient for Adams, Overland, Wells-Fargo and other large purchasers of stagecoaches, to order their leather goods along with their rolling stock.

There were Hill & Company harnesses in that stupendous shipment, that long train of Concord coaches that left Abbot-Downing's shops on their very peak day of April 15, 1868. On the train, too, went Mr. Samuel Parker, a lone passenger, to ride to the end-of-steel and there to assume responsibility — to see that the harnesses were put properly on the horses and the animals properly hitched to the superb coaches which, under the banner of Wells-Fargo, were "to ply between the Eastern and Western divisions of the Pacific Railroad."

Fortunately, some local photographer was alert on that great day,

his big awkward camera set up in an open field along the Concord railroad tracks, and there he caught the locomotive *Pembroke* hauling the train of "15 long platform cars," on each of which rested two of Abbot-Downing's special Western jobs; and four box cars in which were 60 four-horse sets of Hill's harnesses; and proud but lonely Mr. Samuel Parker, agent-extraordinary for the combined firms of Concord's coach and harness makers. The local paper estimated the whole cargo — to be worth \$45,000. Even in that day of modest prices, Wells-Fargo would seem to have been close buyers.

John Burgum, master decorator of the coach firm, was stirred mightily by the special train; and with the photograph in front of him, doubtless needlessly, he took his paints and brushes in hand and embalmed in true and vivid colors, and in one tremendous long painting, this climax of his career as artist-in-residence at Abbot-Downing. True artist that he was, John Burgum improved upon nature and embellished the scene by adding a frock-coated young man who is pointing with wonder, if not awe,

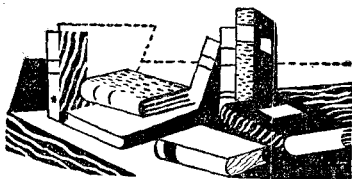
and thus calling the attention of his pretty hoop-skirted companion, to New Hampshire's contribution to the winning of the West. One has no doubt that Destiny was mentioned. It was a favorite word of the day.

Burgum's painting, still bright with its vermilions and canary yellows, is happily preserved in the New Hampshire Historical Society's headquarters in Concord. It unquestionably marks the peak of stagecoach manufacture in the United States, for the railroads continued to expand without halt to the very end of the century and beyond. Then came the internal combustion engine. Together they served to bank the fires in the Abbot-Downing forges, one after the other.

The stout old firm attempted to enter the new age by building fire engines and assorted motor trucks, but their heart was not in it. They had made some 3000 Concord coaches, virtually by hand and with the greatest care imaginable. The motor car business had no place for such artisans. And although there seems never to have been a formal closing of the works, the last Abbot-Downing employee got his gold-headed cane in 1928, and the plant was closed.



THE LIBRARY



W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

by CHARLES ANGOFF

THE case of W. Somerset Maugham is somewhat puzzling. Judging by the generally favorable reviews and large sale of his novels and short-story collections, the success of his plays, particularly *Rain*, based upon one of his stories, and the high respect with which his latter-day literary criticism has been received, one would expect him to have a hold upon the affections of many people in all English-speaking countries. The English generally celebrate, in one way or another, the birthdays of their eminent men of letters. Shaw's decennial birthdays have been, indeed, national events. So, while he lived, were those of H. G. Wells. Mr. Maugham was present at the dinner given to Wells on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, and in his latest book [*A Writer's Notebook*, \$4.00. Doubleday] he reports that it was enjoyable and moving, with none other than Shaw delivering the major tribute. He

quickly adds, however — and his mere mentioning it is revealing — that no such to-do was made of him when he became seventy. It “passed without ceremony. I worked as usual in the morning and in the afternoon went for a walk in the solitary woods behind my house.”

Maugham clearly belongs among the leading English writers of the past quarter-century. Yet his readers feel a distance between themselves and him. His shyness hardly explains it. Thomas Hardy was also shy, and he seldom appeared in public, but that did not prevent his readers from loving him. Maugham is not loved. He is respected. Therein lies the measure of his achievement and of his failure.

He revealed much about himself in *The Summing Up*. In *The Writer's Notebook* he reveals still more. Made up of excerpts from a journal filling “fifteen stoutish volumes,” it is a highly readable and at times exciting amalgam of literary criticism, personal confession, notes for stories, bits of

philosophy, and epigrams. What impresses one immediately in reading the book—even more so than in reading his novels and most of his stories—are Maugham's powers of acute observation. His artistic antennae are always up and extremely sensitive. Even in his callow twenties he could produce penetrating and neatly written epigrams. For example:

A woman may be as wicked as she likes, but if she isn't pretty it won't do her much good. . . .

The philosopher is like the mountaineer who has with difficulty climbed a mountain for the sake of the sunrise, and arriving at the top finds only fog; whereupon he wanders down again. He must be an honest man if he doesn't tell you that the spectacle was stupendous. . . .

Music-hall songs provide the dull with wit, just as proverbs provide them with wisdom. . . .

Maugham's eye for character seems to miss very little. The brief sketches of men and women he has met on his worldwide travels often tell more than would whole books by lesser artists. He stands in awe of no one. Dukes and pimps, duchesses and prostitutes, haughty ladies and bedraggled slum mothers, professors and middle-aged morons, bishops and atheists, bootblacks and princes, they are all human beings to him as he views them for possible fictional material. The

originals of the characters in "The Colonel's Lady" and *Rain* are set down here with masterly brevity and breath-taking incisiveness.

Maugham naturally carries over this gift to his straight reporting, a field in which he easily could have attained as high eminence as in fiction. In little more than a page, for example, while describing a meeting with Mrs. Langtry on board ship from Liverpool to New York in 1916, he manages to expose the essential sadness and triviality of the life of one of the most beautiful women of contemporary history:

She made one remark which I think is the proudest thing I ever heard a woman say. The name of Freddy Gebhardt recurred frequently in her conversation one day, and I, to whom it was new, at last asked who he was. "You mean to say you've never heard of Freddy Gebhardt?" she cried with real astonishment. "Why, he was the most celebrated man in two hemispheres." "Why?" I inquired. "Because I loved him," she answered. . . . I saw her two or three times after we arrived in New York. She was mad about dancing and went nearly every night to a dance hall. She said the men danced beautifully and you only had to pay them fifty cents.

In less than a page and a half, with a few broad strokes, he draws a remarkably vivid portrait of Charlie

Chaplin, and at the same time brings to the surface an aspect of the comedian's personality that seems to have escaped most other writers:

His fun is simple and sweet and spontaneous. And yet all the time you have a feeling that at the back of it all is a profound melancholy. He is a creature of moods and it does not require his facetious assertion: "Gee, I had such a fit of the blues last night I didn't hardly know what to do with myself" to warn you that his humor is lined with sadness. He does not give you the impression of a happy man. I have a notion that he suffers from a nostalgia of the slums. The celebrity he enjoys, his wealth, imprison him in a way of life in which he finds only constraint. . . . To him the streets of southern London are the scene of frolic, gaiety and extravagant adventure. They have to him a reality which the well-kept avenues, bordered with trim houses, in which live the rich, can never possess.

Especially worthy of mention are Maugham's remarks on Russia, where he served as a British confidential agent during the first World War. It is truly amazing how much he absorbed of the Russian character so swiftly. His sections on Kerensky and Savinkov merit the attention of historians and biographers.

His facility at fictional invention surely need not be commented upon. He is superb at telling a story, as is

evident even in his none too successful later works. And of course he can write. It is true that his style lacks the rich texture of, say, George Moore's prose, and it hasn't the quiet, sad warmth of Thomas Hardy's pages. It is also somewhat poor in imagery, and his supply of sentence patterns and paragraph configurations is limited. But always he is clear and sharp, and always one has the feeling that he is telling only what he knows, without any bogus embellishments. Maugham is a sound, honest, direct writer, perhaps the best in his class in contemporary English literature.

II

A few words about his literary criticism, with which he has occupied himself considerably of late. It is fresh and occasionally startling in its originality. He does not offer a re-working of the opinions of his predecessors, but the result of his own cogitations compounded of his own vast reading and personal experiences with an extraordinary variety of human beings literally over the entire world. Is the critical world in a religious frenzy over the works of Henry James? It makes no impression whatever on Maugham, who dismisses the American-British author in a few lines:

Henry James . . . did not live, he observed life from a window, and too

often was inclined to content himself with no more than what his friends told him they saw when *they* looked out of a window. . . . In the end the point of Henry James is neither his artistry nor his seriousness, but his personality, and this was curious and charming and a trifle absurd.

Maugham is very good on Jeremy Taylor, author of that strangely appealing book, *Holy Dying*. He points out the utter lack of artifice in Taylor, his use of the most obvious words which a more conscious stylist would scrupulously avoid, and yet which in *Holy Dying* somehow rise into "tremendous sentences," that stir and soothe at the same time, and altogether fill one with a large, good feeling toward all that lives. "One cannot turn a page without finding some felicitous expression, some new order of simple words which seems to give them a new value; and often enough some picturesque passage, overladen, like that earliest charming rococo in which decoration was exuberant, but notwithstanding kept within the bounds of perfect taste."

Maugham believes that Santayana would have done far better had he written "semi-philosophical romances after the manner of Anatole France" than attempted to rival Immanuel Kant. And of the modern poets, who are making so much noise with their corrugated unintelligibilities and in-

tricate vacuities, he says: "I should be content with less cleverness if only they had more feeling. They make little songs not from great sorrows but from the sober pleasures of a good education."

The Russian writers have fascinated Maugham, and his observations on Gorky, Tolstoy, Gogol, Turgenev, and Dostoyevsky are profoundly suggestive. He says of them all, chiefly Dostoyevsky, that they "made the greatest novels of Western Europe look artificial." The great writers of England and France "in comparison seemed formal and frigid. The life they portrayed, these English and French novelists, was familiar; . . . They described a society that was policed. Its thoughts had been thought too often. Its emotions, even when extravagant, were extravagant within ordered limits. It was fiction fit for a middle-class civilization, well-fed, well-clothed, well-housed, and its readers were resolute to bear in mind that all they read was make-believe."

III

It is clear that Maugham is one of the most cultured men of letters of our time. There is no sham in him, no cheapness, and his all-inclusive honesty is exceeded only by that of André Gide. He is, all in all, the civilized man *par excellence*. He takes naturally to the true, the quiet and

the beautiful, in every country. He loves England, but he is also at home wherever men and women of taste and knowledge and artistic achievement and aspiration gather. Why, then, do his readers feel so cool toward him? Why is there so much doubt about his standing as a writer, even though it is universally admitted that his works include some of the truly superior fiction of our time?

Possible answers to these questions are supplied in the present book. There are extremely few portraits or references to genuinely good, well-disposed, and attractive men and women in the *Notebook*—which is also true, to a large extent, of his major novels, stories, and plays. His characters are generally both weak and mean-spirited, unredeemed by the pressure of good intentions, and operating in a world that is “one big tangle,” full of misery and bitterness. There is the prohibitionist lecturer, who is a heavy drinker in secret and who hides the empty bottles in a room to which he alone has the key; there is the missionary with the “hollow cheeks and high cheekbones,” and the “look of suppressed fire,” who finally has his will of a former prostitute who is seeking a job in a hotel bar; there is the man who tells a friend of a third man about to shoot himself, and on being asked what he plans to do about it,

merely “ordered a bottle of wine and sat down to await the sound of the shot”; there is the half-caste who promises his white wife to refrain from following the ways of the natives, but soon she finds him submitting to native medicine men—at the same time that she discovers that she is with child by him; there is the canon who “avoided all religious questions, almost as though they were improprieties,” and who looks upon whole sections of the Bible as manifest nonsense.

Such characters and situations, needless to say, are well within the province of literature, and writers, including Maugham, have done brilliantly by them. But Maugham’s treatment has one important difference. When other writers dealt with such characters, they did so because men and women occasionally disappointed them. Even Dean Swift’s violent and virulent contempt for the whole human race was but the obverse of his deeply religious love for the divine core within each human breast—a love that spilled over in great abundance in his letters to Stella. Maugham is not violent. He does not seem to be that interested. He is not disappointed. He views with cold indifference, content merely to describe.

Maugham’s view of women is unique in the history of English

letters. Most of the poets and prose writers have contemplated woman with warmth and some with adoration. When they portrayed shrews, they were careful to say or imply that such women were exceptions. The same authors who wrote of evil women also wrote of women who graced life with an indescribable softness and heavenly joy. Maugham looks upon the latter as the exception. He believes that most women destroy men, playing havoc with their every dream. Mildred, in *Of Human Bondage*, perhaps his most successful work, is a malevolent force. The women sketched in the *Notebook* are of the same stripe. There is the one who was so delighted when she was told her husband had tuberculosis (he would then be completely under her thumb) that she forced him to seek a suicide's death in preference to living with her; there is the woman who sneered at her barber husband for wanting to improve his lot, killed every spark of ambition in him, and finally saw to it that their son also became a barber, thus ruining both her menfolk; and, to put an end to a list that could be very long, there is the woman who confesses to an imaginary affair with her husband's nephew in order to save him (her husband) from a murder conviction (he killed the nephew), and in this way manages to humiliate him so

much that he is driven to put her to death.

Maugham has no doubts that "The usual result of a man's cohabitation with a woman, however sanctioned by society, is to make him a little more petty, a little meaner than he would otherwise have been." Nearly all women are physiological messes, he says, and not many of them, for sleeping purposes, are worth more than "a fiver, unless you're in love," but "the love that lasts longest is the love that is never returned." If women are disappointing as wives, mistresses, and companions, they are even more deplorable as mothers: "Few misfortunes can befall a boy which bring worse consequences than to have a really affectionate mother."

Maugham admits that his life has been "perhaps better than most people's, but I should see no point in repeating it." There are some experiences he wishes he had had, some silly and mean things he wishes he had not done, and some realms of knowledge he wishes he had become acquainted with. But he insists that if he were offered another chance at life, he would refuse. "I have had enough. I neither believe in immortality nor desire it." Long ago, Maugham put high value in art. Now he thinks that "art, unless it leads to right action, is no more than the opium of the intelligentsia." By right

action he means deeds of sheer heroism, like a soldier dying for his country, or a woman submitting to outrage rather than reveal her country's secrets. In the contemplation of such splendor man "may find some refuge from despair." But it is quite evident that Maugham is not too sure even of this.

There is hardly a trace of pity in Maugham, and very little ordinary affection, though intellectually he is quick to note the absence of both pity and affection in other writers. No lyric line of any proportions is discernible in his writings. There is no ecstasy. There is no passion. There is only a limitless desert of frigid, contemptuous indifference. At times, indeed, he seems not to belong to the human race. He apparently loves no

one and nothing. His readers have sensed this from the beginning. They cannot possibly love him because he does not love them. It is likely that they will yet desert him altogether. The enduring artists have been passionately drawn to the human race, sharing its fears, hopes, agonies, and ecstasies. They dramatized these emotions so profoundly and so nobly that they added a new splendor to the common humanity of the race, a new awareness of the ineffably beautiful mystery inherent in every living person and thing. Maugham's inability to adhere to, or even to perceive, this central function of art, is the final measure of his failure, despite his very considerable gifts, to achieve fellowship with the truly great in the literary art.

AWARENESS

BY ETHEL BARNETT DE VITO

Oh, soft unleafed and slow unrolled,
Awareness grows as buds unfold,
Awakens like another eye
That lets the child behold the sky
And makes man see beyond his doubt
The answers that the stars spell out.

Chart us no joy, nor outline pain
For think you in the vital brain
Life has not sketched it long ago?
The third eye sees, and so we know.

THE CHECK LIST



BIOGRAPHY

THIS I REMEMBER, by Eleanor Roosevelt. \$4.50. *Harper*. In this book of memoirs, Mrs. Roosevelt deals with the period between her husband's election as Governor of New York and his death in April 1945. She writes chiefly about her experiences as the wife of one of the most colorful and powerful figures of our time, but in doing so she reveals much that will fascinate both professional historians and lay readers for decades to come. She tells which people pleased her husband and which people annoyed him or aroused his contempt, and she also tells what her husband was doing and how he felt at certain crucial times in his Presidency. A deeply religious man, he had no enduring fears and almost never allowed circumstances, however trying, to ruffle him. Despite his patrician upbringing, he was genuinely democratic in his instincts. He thought, for example, that Peter of Yugoslavia should get a job and stop waiting to be asked to return to his throne. As for the New Deal, its genesis and meaning, Mrs. Roosevelt says flatly that it "was, of course, nothing more than an effort to preserve our economic

system." The entire book portrays a woman of great strength of character and unflinching charm. There are many excellent photographs.

W. C. FIELDS, *His Follies and Fortunes*, by Robert Lewis Taylor. \$3.50. *Double-day*. When W. C. Fields died in 1946, at the age of 67, there also died, most likely, the greatest comic in the history of the American stage so far. He didn't get the rapt critical attention given to Charlie Chaplin, but he was a better actor, a greater satirist, and surely a more appealing man. With his utter contempt for all the phonies of civilization, and for its so-called principles of social living, he won the silent adoration of all the little men and little women who, deep down in their hearts, knew how generally sound his philosophy was. His life was one prolonged exercise in amorality, and that only endeared him still more to his beloved suckers. Mr. Taylor was obviously a great admirer of his, and he has dug up a lot of fascinating stuff about him, especially his boyhood.

JOHN L. LEWIS, by Saul Alinsky. \$4.00. *Putnam*. An immensely readable

biography of the most interesting, and probably most important, American labor leader of our times. Mr. Alinsky, a prominent Chicago sociologist, is rather uncritical of his protagonist, but he nevertheless makes out a convincing case for the proposition that Lewis has done more for organized labor than any other unionist of his day, especially in his rôle as founder of the CIO. The author and subject apparently spent a good deal of time together during the preparation of the book, and it contains some important new material, e.g., Lewis' emphatic denial of the story, previously printed in Frances Perkins' biography of Roosevelt, that he split with the President in 1940 because his demand to go on the Democratic ticket as Vice-Presidential candidate was turned down.

CHALLENGING YEARS. THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF STEPHEN WISE. \$4.00. *Putnam*. There is hardly anything here about the late Rabbi Wise's personal life. He deals almost entirely with his public life — his efforts in behalf of humane working conditions, for clean and efficient municipal government, for internationally-minded Federal government, and for Zionism. He knew a large number of men and women eminent during the past half-century, and on occasion he reveals important aspects of their personalities which had not been known before. His sections on Justices Brandeis and Cardozo, and Presidents Taft, Wilson, Hoover, and Roosevelt, are particularly valuable. No matter how one may feel about Rabbi Wise's own contributions to Jewish-

American life — some called him a prophet in Israel, while others saw in him little more than a publicity-seeker — one must admit after reading this book that he had courage, was extraordinarily well informed, and accomplished much good.

HISTORY

ROOSEVELT AND THE RUSSIANS, *The Yalta Conference*, by Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., edited by Walter Johnson. \$4.00. *Doubleday*. This is, indeed, what its publishers claim it is, "the inside story of the Yalta Conference," and the late Mr. Stettinius deserves the thanks of historians for allowing his notes on the Conference to be published. It is his contention that Stalin made more concessions than we did at Yalta, that the concessions we made were in any case inevitable, and that the agreement was necessary to "test the good faith of the Soviet Union." The only real difficulty with Yalta, he maintains, is that the Russians did not live up to the commitments they took on there. Mr. Stettinius' own data do not always bear out his thesis. The Russian "concessions," for example, seem to have been merely strategic retreats from preposterous demands that had been advanced only as bargaining counters.

PROMISE AND FULFILMENT, by Arthur Koestler. \$4.00. *Macmillan*. There are three sections to this book: in the first, Mr. Koestler reviews the history of Zionism from the Balfour Declaration down to the present; in the second, he

reprints sections from a diary he kept on recent visits to the Holy Land; and in the third, he offers his views of the present régime in Israel. Part One is a rehash of familiar history, and not too well written. Mr. Koestler is taking his new knowledge of psychology very seriously and applying it with little discrimination, so that whole pages of Part One are gibberish. The excerpts from his diary make fairly interesting reading, for in them Koestler the novelist, unencumbered by bogus intellectual profundity, writes with perception. In Part Three, he says some wise things about the danger of theocracy gaining dominance in the new state, but when he criticizes Hebrew and Yiddish culture, he exposes himself as not very familiar with Jewish literature and philosophy during the past hundred years.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

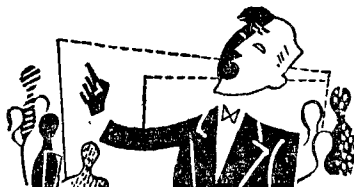
THE ROAD AHEAD, by John T. Flynn. \$2.50. *Devlin-Adair*. In great detail and with considerable vigor Mr. Flynn argues that "We are being drawn into socialism on the British gradualist model. We are well on the road — much further along than our people suspect." He offers several suggestions for saving this country from following the British example. Perhaps the most important of them is that "We must stop 'planning' for socialism and begin planning to make our free system of private enterprise operate at its highest capacity." He firmly believes that "the system of production by private enterprise in a severely restrained republican government

is the only one in which men can enjoy the inestimable blessing of freedom."

LIFE AMONG THE DOCTORS, by Paul de Kruif. \$4.75. *Harcourt, Brace*. Herein Dr. de Kruif writes about some twenty doctors of the past ten years who, in his opinion, have made contributions to medical science and some of whom have had to battle the "bureaucrats" of organized medicine. His considered opinion is that "there remain aspects of medical commerce that stink. As for example, when doctors try to thwart new science that might guard our lives for a pittance but that at the same time will rob them of business." Dr. de Kruif is what might be called a two-fisted manipulator of the English language. Some of his heroes are "big shots," others are "big and burly," still others are "rough-and-tumble death-fighters." He seems to think this sort of language adds strength to what he has to say; actually, it does the opposite.

THE EDUCATION OF FREE MEN, by Horace M. Kallen. \$5.00. *Farrar, Straus*. Dr. Kallen, a recent member of President Truman's Commission of Higher Education, believes emphatically that Americans must be educated for life in a democracy, that schooling is a failure when it consists only in piling information into young people's heads without giving them an affirmative feeling for our free institutions. He is, needless to say, a strong believer in the separation of church and State, and parts of the book are a sustained polemic against the Catholic view of education.

THE OPEN FORUM



HOW GOOD ARE THE WONDER DRUGS?

SIR: I wish to express my approbation of the article, "The Other Side of the Wonder Drugs" [by James and Peta Fuller], in the October *MERCURY*. . . . As a pharmacist, I can appreciate the truths in the article; and as "just a man in the street," I have met any number of people who have experienced the reactions described in the article.

The medical fraternity, taking for granted the laudatory and glowing reports of a few cases presented by the prejudiced pharmaceutical manufacturers, often without analyzing the reports, rushes to get on the bandwagon . . .

M. L. STRODLER, PH.G.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

SIR: James and Peta Fuller are to be lauded for their courageous and humanitarian effort in exposing to the public the deleterious effects of the so-called wonder drugs.

In future issues, I shall be looking forward to more of the Fullers' articles.

ABRAHAM KOMAROW, D.C.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

SIR: I wish to congratulate you. . . . It is all too seldom that the public has the opportunity to learn the truth behind the so-called wonder drugs. I sincerely believe that more of this type of article will be well received by the reading public, and perhaps make more people wake up and realize the truth. . . .

DORIS M. DONNELLY

Syasset, N. Y.

SIR: Congratulations on your refreshingly informative article, "The Other Side of the Wonder Drugs," by James and Peta Fuller, in the October *MERCURY*. You have done your readers a real service in presenting the inherent dangers associated with the use of such substances. A week doesn't pass when the tragic truth of the article is not brought to my attention in my work. (I am a chiropractor.) Unfortunately, at that time the damage has been done.

The shame of the "wonder drug" situation is this: a factual report such as the Fullers' is a drop in the proverbial bucket compared with the deluge of

favorable, misguided publicity that these meteoric panaceas receive.

The ignorance and mis-education of the populace is appalling. Many of our present-day medical practices are reminiscent of the Middle Ages. As George Bernard Shaw put it, we have substituted the hypodermic needle for the efficacy of baptismal water.

An alert writer or editor can see the opportunity and market waiting for articles exposing corrupt and fallacious methods in handling the sick. In the summer of 1947, the *Woman's Home Companion* carried an article entitled "Unnecessary Operations," which received much comment and was widely reprinted. More recently (August 1949), *Harper's* magazine had a critical survey of medical practice. . . .

THOMAS E. GALLAER

New York City

WINNING CONVERTS

SIR: In Dean W. Russell Bowie's article, "Protestant Concern over Catholicism" [see the September *MERCURY*], he quotes from our symposium, *Winning Converts*, the following sentence: "Above all, be sure that he [the neophyte] understands that he cannot save his soul outside the Catholic Church." Dean Bowie cites this as conflicting with the Church's condemnation of the views of certain dismissed lay instructors at Boston College, who denied the possibility of salvation for all not in formal union with the Church, and as an evidence of the Church's intolerance.

By failing to cite the context and back-

ground of the quotation and by failing himself to understand the Catholic interpretation of the famous phrase of Augustine, "Outside the Church there is no salvation," the Dean gives, unwittingly we hope, a misleading and false impression to his non-Catholic readers.

First, in fairness it should have been stated that the sentence quoted was taken from an instruction addressed by a priest to other priests and lay apostles engaged in convert instruction, all of whom are thoroughly familiar with the sense in which that phrase is understood in Catholic usage.

Secondly, the sense in which that phrase is used by Catholic writers should have been explained for the benefit of the non-Catholic readers. Its meaning can be found in any of the hundreds of authoritative books explaining the Catholic religion; ten thousand newspapers recently carried that explanation in connection with the Boston College case. In the writer's widely used book of instruction, *The Faith of Millions*, the Catholic use of that phrase is thus explained:

"The question may be asked, Does the Catholic Church believe then that all persons who are not members of her fold will be condemned? Here a distinction is necessary. There are members of the *body* of the Church, and members of the *soul* of the Church. Those are members of the *body* of the Church who formally profess her faith, are visibly united to her in public worship and in the reception of her sacraments. Those, on the other hand, who through no culpable negligence of their own, do not know that the

Church is the true Church, but who live up to the lights of their own conscience, are said to be members of the *soul* of the Church. In contrast with these are those who are convinced of the truth of the Catholic Church, but who for some selfish reason fail to profess their faith in her. It is only of these latter, who remain out of the Church in bad faith until death, that the Church teaches that the words of Christ apply: 'He that believeth not, shall be condemned!' " (Pp. 55-56.)

The subject is again treated in connection with baptism, whose necessity is inculcated by Christ, in the following clear and explicit language: "The Church with her all-embracing love for human souls, and her ceaseless solicitude that no single individual be lost, teaches that many persons, perhaps millions, who are unaware of the command of Christ to be baptized, but who strive to lead good lives and who wish to obey God, may receive baptism by desire. Even heathens in distant lands where the gospel of Christ has scarcely penetrated, who wish to do God's will in all things may be said to receive this form of baptism. For the general intention to do the will of God includes the implicit desire to receive baptism, since this is one of God's holy commands. The implicit desire of baptism is defined as a state of mind in which a man would ardently long for baptism, if he knew that it was necessary for salvation. This is simply an application of the uniform teaching of the Church that God never punishes any person except in so far as he acts contrary to the light that has been given him." (P. 165.)

In short, the Church teaches that even though a person is in error, as long as he is in good faith and lives up to the dictates of his own conscience, he is a member of the *soul* of the Church and can be saved. Could anything show more clearly the Church's respect for objective truth and at the same time her boundless love and solicitude for the salvation of every human being, regardless of race, creed or color? Can the human mind conceive of a stand wherein are blended so admirably an unfaltering adherence to objective truth and historical reality and an unswerving love for those who in good faith fail to find the same? Instead of arousing ill-will, the Church's position, when properly understood, cannot fail to elicit the admiration, esteem and good-will of all.

Is it too much to expect that the Dean of a Theological Seminary would at least familiarize himself with the official and authoritative teaching of the Catholic Church on a subject of importance and universal interest before he undertakes to portray that teaching? The failure to do so causes him to draw not a portrait but a caricature and results in a flagrant misrepresentation of the faith of not only 30 million fellow Americans but also of the more than 400 million Catholics throughout the world. Is such a misrepresentation of the faith of Catholics a contribution to understanding and harmony or to discord and bitterness?

The Dean likewise criticizes in a general way certain charts in *Winning Converts* as disparaging to Protestantism. While he does not specify, it is likely he refers to the chart showing the establish-

ment of the Catholic Church by Christ in Jerusalem in 33 A.D. as contrasted with the establishment of the various Protestant sects by various human founders in the sixteenth and subsequent centuries. The chart is similar to that published in *Life* magazine, November 10, 1947, showing the comparatively recent origin of the various Protestant denominations. While the chart gives no support to the illusion, fondly cherished by many Protestants, that their denominations are of first-century origin, they are sober history. In fact, the dates for virtually all the Protestant denominations cited are those given by the United States government in its Religious Census for 1936, published under the title *Religious Bodies*.

Instead of getting irritated at us for showing these historical facts in graphic form, the Dean ought to get angry at the facts or rather at those who refuse to face them. It is not pleasant for Protestants to face the fact that Protestantism did not see the light of day until 1524, when Father Martin Luther founded the first Protestant sect, and the further fact that the term "Protestantism" dates only from the Diet of Spire in 1529. These are elementary historical facts which the reader can see recorded in the United States Religious Census, in the chart showing the origin of the Protestant sects in *Life* magazine, and in any impartial historical work.

We mention these facts in a kind and friendly manner, with no thought of embarrassing Dean Bowie, and only for the purpose of removing the false and misleading impression which the Dean un-

wittingly created. We invite all readers to investigate the teachings and practices of the Catholic faith as presented by a properly qualified scholar who will present a true picture and not a dishonest and misleading caricature: we are confident that they will admire not only the logical consistency of Catholic doctrine but also the broad-mindedness of the Church and her boundless love and ceaseless solicitude for the salvation of every human being.

JOHN A. O'BRIEN

*The University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Ind.*

SIR: You showed me a letter written you by the Reverend John A. O'Brien. He attempts to make two points on which I shall comment, in reverse order.

He refers to a chart of his "showing the establishment of the Catholic Church by Christ in Jerusalem in 33 A.D." Anybody can make up a chart for propaganda purposes, but it is not so easy to get the facts to fit it. Here is the old fictitious Roman claim that Christ constituted a particular ecclesiastical organization with Peter as its head and the Popes of Rome as his direct successors, and that this cut-and-dried organization is to control the salvation of souls in this world and in the next. No matter how much breath the Roman Catholic propagandists may put into that assertion, there is no more substance in it than there is substance in a balloon blown up until it bursts. If anyone wants to see the fantastic flimsiness of the idea that Peter was made by Christ Himself the authoritative head of His Church (which is the foundation for the

supposed authority of the Popes) he need only read in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians St. Paul's indignant words concerning Peter: "I withstood him to the face because he was to be blamed," and consider then what Paul, the greatest of the preachers of the Gospel, would have thought of the notion upon which Roman Catholic claims are built.

Professor O'Brien asserts that the churches of Protestantism all began in the sixteenth or some subsequent century. The Church of England goes straight back through the Reformation period to its unbroken Catholic lineage through all the Christian centuries. Other Protestant communions are as a matter of fact more Catholic than Roman Catholicism, in the true sense that they represent what the great word *Catholic* rightly means, namely, *universal*. They are built upon the simplicity of the saving gospel of the love of God in Christ, which was the universal mark of the early Christian decades where the roots of Christian religion are. What happened at the Reformation was that parts of the age-long Christian fellowship recognized corruptions which had crept into the Church, and sought to recover a purity of the Gospel that had been almost lost. By that fact they no more became new churches than a man who washes his face thereby becomes not the man himself but somebody else. Actually, it is modern Romanism which has lost its continuity. The Council of Trent, in the sixteenth century, established an organization quite different in its ecclesiastical pretensions from anything that the church

of the first disciples would ever have dreamed. And the doctrine of Papal infallibility, first claimed by some of the medieval Popes, was formally promulgated only 79 years ago.

And now for Professor O'Brien's other point. He is troubled because I used his own words, according to which Roman Catholic propagandists are instructed that, when they make a convert, they are to insist upon "his abandonment of the heretical church, and his acceptance of the true Church. . . . Above all, be sure that he understands that he cannot save his soul outside the Catholic Church." He says that these words really do not mean what they bluntly say. The Roman Catholic Church, he says, makes a distinction between "members of the *body* of the Church and members of the *soul* of the Church." That is true theoretically. Roman Catholic casuistry does thus give itself a loophole from being shut up into an utter bigotry. But the important matter, and the one which is of concern to our American life, is that in actual fact Roman Catholic teachers do not make this finespun distinction, and do not convey it to their people. The impression which they overwhelmingly create is the claim that the Roman Catholic Church is the exclusive vehicle of salvation. This by itself would not trouble Protestants. As Mrs. Roosevelt wrote in her letter to Cardinal Spellman last July: "The final judgment, my dear Cardinal, of the worthiness of all human beings is in the hands of God." If the matter were only a denominational issue, Protestants could quite serenely leave the Roman Catholic spokesmen to be as

complacent as they please; but the grave and critical fact is that Roman Catholicism carries its assumptions not only into the realm of its own religion, but out into community relationships of all kinds, as I pointed out in my original article. In claiming to be the exclusive interpreter of the truth of God, it frequently and deliberately creates in our American communities antagonisms and divisions that destroy our democratic unity. What the ordinary Roman Catholic is taught and assumes is not the subtle distinctions which Professor O'Brien elaborates, but rather what he said in his own words, and what was said in the words of Francis J. Connell, included in my original article, which he refrains from quoting: "The doctrines proposed by the Catholic Church as truths of divine faith constitute the message of God to mankind. Every word bears the guarantee of divine wisdom and divine veracity. All men are obliged, under penalty of eternal damnation, to accept all these truths without restriction or equivocation."

I showed the copy of Professor O'Brien's letter to a brilliant teacher, whose name would be known to many thousands of Americans — a man brought up as a Roman Catholic but who has now left that Church on account of what he regarded to be its narrowness and obscurantism. He tells me that these words which I have just given were exactly what he, as a young man, was taught, and that the dilution of them which Professor O'Brien sets forth would have been news to him. I have just been in a small town in New York State where

nearly everybody knows everybody else, and all might be friends. A Boy Scout troop was organized and everything in it was going happily. But the Roman priest forbade his boys to remain in it. Some Roman Catholic sisters have been brought into the town, and they have proceeded to teach their children that they must not mix with Protestants, and ought not even go to play in Protestant homes. That is what happens to community life when a church actually teaches that everybody outside of its fold is in ungodly error.

But, unhappily, letters and arguments will not get us anywhere. It is to be regretted that none of the Roman Catholic spokesmen have made any affirmative response to the central suggestion of my original article, that Roman Catholic official representatives sit down with leaders of Protestantism "to find out in friendliness what the real reasons for friction are and whether they can be allayed." The Roman Church will not answer that kind of approach. Let American public opinion judge whether that kind of church is in tune with the free and unafraid democracy which America believes in.

W. RUSSELL BOWIE

New York City

THE POWER OF LOVE

SIR: Today I picked up your magazine to read "My Experience with Psychoanalysis" [see the October *MERCURY*]. Lucy Freeman gave me such a realistic, though vicarious, experience that it left me with a new faith in the power of love

and the ultimate victory of truth over
ageless ignorance and mis-education. . . .

P. W. CHAMBERS

Oak Park, Ill.

CATS AND COMMISSARS

SIR: There is one aspect, in particular, of the vivisection question, on which Miss Louise Cross, writing in *THE AMERICAN MERCURY* for August, seems grossly misinformed [see "The Anti-Vivisection Nonsense"].

I happen to know from first-hand observation . . . that the principal support of this movement in California, if not also elsewhere, comes from the Communists and their cohorts. At various times in recent years, full-scale attempts have been made to push bills through the California legislature, that, had they succeeded, would have legalized the torture of animals in the name of "science," and would have freed the torturer from fear of reprisals by outraged public opinion. Each time such a bill was presented, the loudest clamor in behalf of it came from Hollywood Communists. . . . Vivisection appeals to the Communists because it harmonizes with their cult of Man (re-made in the image of Stalinist-Russian prototypes) and the dogma of scientific materialism. From the beginning, the Communist campaign supporting animal-torture was malignant, militant, scientifically grounded, vicious, unscrupulous, and widespread. The idea of torturing animals who cannot defend themselves against or escape from their torturers obviously appeals to the frustrated egos of power-hungry commissars. . . .

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